

RYE BROOK POLICE DEPARTMENT

2020

ANNUAL REPORT



Gregory J. Austin
Chief of Police

J. Arnold
Lieutenant

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Rye Brook Police Department, 2020

This annual report for 2020 contains statistics and information about the performance of the Rye Brook Police Department to keep the public informed about public safety in Rye Brook, New York. It is not possible to measure and quantify everything performed by a police department, overall, crime is low, and Rye Brook remains a safe place to live and raise a family.

Like everyone in 2020, the Rye Brook Police Department had to learn and become familiar with personal protective equipment, social distancing, methods of limiting contact with others, and not seeing our loved ones out of fear of passing to them a deadly disease that we may not know we have.

Officers were called to respond to calls knowing that they would encounter a person with a deadly virus and our officers did so without hesitation and throughout this pandemic our officers served the community above and beyond what they always do.

Initially, we adjusted our operations to limit contact between officers and the public. We stopped installing car seats, civilian fingerprinting for permits and licenses, and we took reports over the phone for incident documentation.

We understood that unnecessarily exposing the public to our police officers and our police officers to the public was no longer acceptable or a reasonable expectation.

As the early days of the pandemic proceeded, we found ourselves scrambling to find PPE and almost immediately, we were faced with multiple officers coming down with the virus. Fortunately, everyone recovered and returned to work within a few weeks. But having multiple officers unavailable to work at the same time created a challenge; how do we continue our operations with limited personnel, and how do we keep more officers from getting infected?

We have creative and smart people in our Department and an alternative schedule was developed with two platoons each containing two squads working a 12-hour shift. One squad worked from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm and the second squad worked from 7:00 pm to 7:00 am.

This system limited the exposure Department members had to each other and, created the capacity to have more officers available if someone becomes ill and cannot work for a long period of time.

All of this would never have been possible without the support of the Mayor and Village Board of Trustees, Village Administrator and Police Benevolent Association.

We operated under this schedule from March until July.

When PPE was scarce, residents donated face masks, disinfectant spray, and wipes to the Department. Some people donated face masks that they made themselves.

In the Rye Brook Residents Facebook group, a resident posted that she had just purchased a meal and sent it to the police department. This post created a drive to create a fund to purchase meals for police officers, fire fighters and EMS. The outpouring of support from the public was incredible and we all appreciate the kindness of the community.

The tragic death of George Floyd at the hands of police officers in Minneapolis, sparked protests throughout the country that set law enforcement and community relations back years, created a mistrust by the communities we serve, and painted all police officers with the same broad brush. 2020 was a difficult year for law enforcement nationally.

Despite these challenges, we remained committed to serve the community and remain sensitive to the needs of our residents.

I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the men and women of the department for their extraordinary work effort and commitment to serving the citizens of our community. Their dedication is evident by our continued strides in building stronger partnerships with our citizens, business owners, community leaders, and visitors. Exceptional service to the community continues to remain our focus.

Thank you to all that support the Rye Brook Police Department as we will continue to provide excellent and professional public service. I am proud to be the Police Chief of this Department and I look forward to an exciting and productive 2021.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Chief Gregory J. Austin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

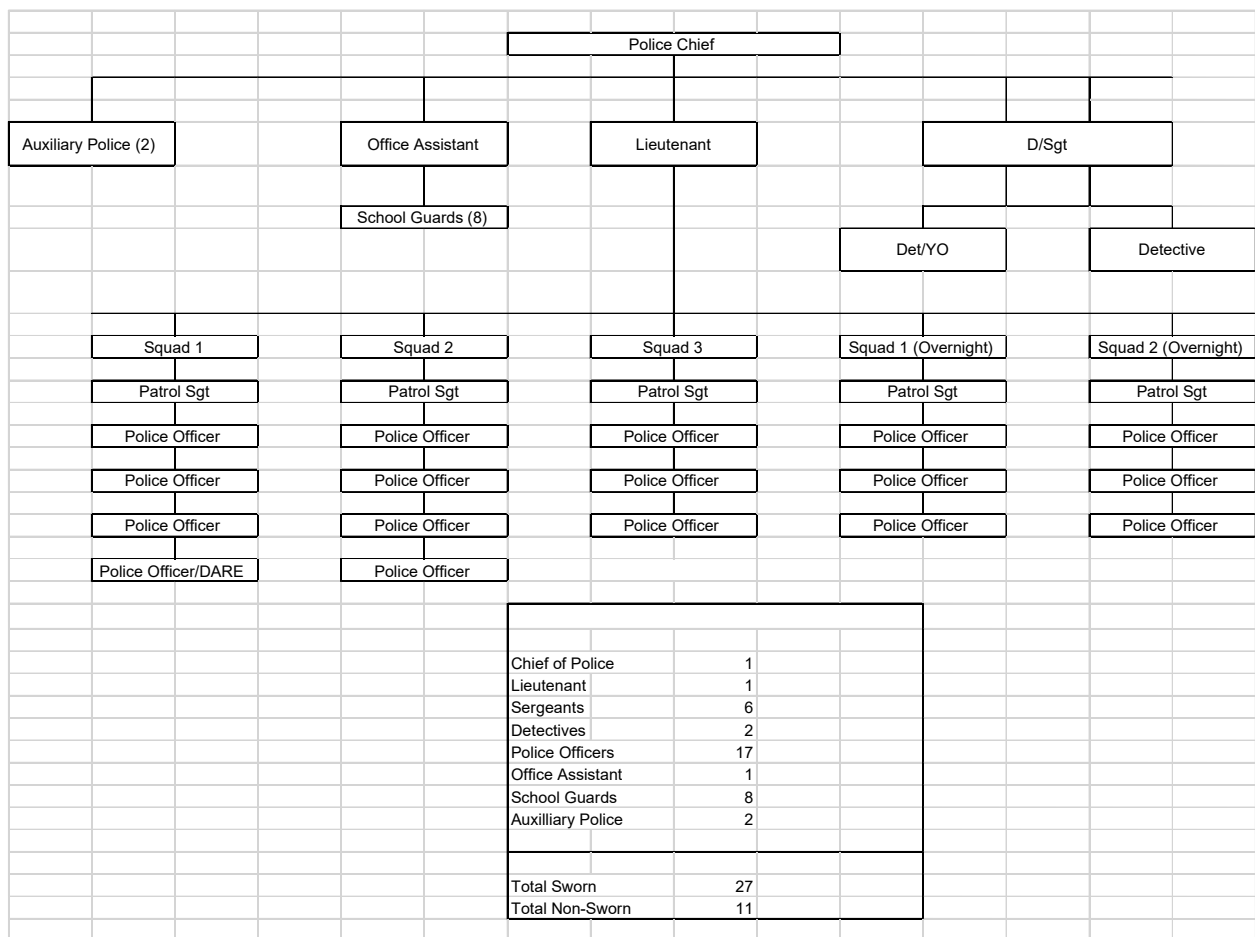
Gregory J. Austin
Chief of Police

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Village of Rye Brook Police Department including the duties and responsibilities of all of its members is as follows:

1. To protect life and property;
2. To prevent crime;
3. To detect and arrest offenders;
4. To preserve the public peace; and
5. To enforce all laws and ordinances.

Organizational Chart



Statistical Information

Uniformed Crime Report Part I Offenses			
	2019	2020	Difference
Murder	0	0	No change
Rape	0	0	No change
Robbery	0	0	No change
Aggravated Assault	0	0	No change
Burglary	6	4	-2
Larceny	58	54	-4
Motor Vehicle Theft	5	18	+13
Uniformed Crime Report Part II Offenses			
	2019	2020	Difference
Controlled Substance Possession	4	2	-2
Dangerous Weapon Possession	1	0	-1
Sex Offense	1	2	+1
Forgery	1	2	+1
Criminal Mischief	13	17	+4
Fraud	55	42	-13
Simple Assault	2	3	+1
Offenses Against Family	1	0	-1
DWI	7	7	No change
Loitering	2	0	-2
All Other Offenses	11	9	-2
Calls for Service			
Total Calls for Service	5,870	4,853	-1017
Motor Vehicle Accidents	262	152	-110
Traffic Tickets	713	250	-463
Parking Tickets	782	549	-233

Calls for Service continued			
	2019	2020	Difference
Quality of Life Violations	15	6	-9
Custodial Arrests	71	43	-28
Registered Sex Offenders	3	2	-1
Citizen Complaints against officers and/or Dept	2	1	-1
Domestic Incidents	68	48	-20
Alarms (Burglar/Fire)	814	553	-261
Medical Aided	826	368	-458
Impounded Vehicles	49	30	-190
Use of force by officers*	4	3	-1

*In 2020, New York State changed the reporting requirement for use of force by a police officer to include displaying a weapon.

Contract Duty

Members of the public or organizations can contract directly with the Village to hire police officers for valid public safety reasons for security or traffic control above normal patrol. In 2020, seven groups hired officers for seventeen different events. Rye Brook Police Officers provided security or traffic control within Rye Brook to these groups in 2020.

- Altice
- Blind Brook School District
- Consolidated Edison
- Port Chester School District
- Phoenix Communications
- Bertussi's Contracting Services
- Suez Water Westchester, Inc.

Training

In-Service Training

Each year the department provides in-service training to the members of the department. Additionally, each supervisor attends eight hours of training specific to their position as first line supervisors.

In-service training in 2020 included the following:

- Distracted Driving, Identification Procedures, Domestic Incident Reporting, Adult Protective Services (4 hours)
- Use of Force and Legal Updates (8 hours)
- Firearms training qualification (16 hours)
- Workplace Violence / Right to Know (3.5 hours)
- Sexual Harassment / Blood Borne Pathogens (4 hours)
- Taser & CPR (5 hours)
- Anti-Bias (4 hours)

Professional Development

Each police officer can participate in workshops, seminars, and continuing education to enhance their professional development. Below is a list of the professional development that officers took advantage of in 2020. Again, due to COVID-19, the opportunity for training was limited and was mostly done online.

- DWI and Standardized Field Sobriety Testing Refresher Course
- ALERRT
- Online Social Networking & Criminal Investigations
- Perspectives on Police Reforms
- Transformational Leadership
- Reality Based Training (train the trainer course)
- Disability Awareness Training
- Lethality Assessment

Retirement and New Hires

In 2020, the Rye Brook Police Department had one officer retire and hired two new police officers.

Police Officer Orelvis Lazala joined the Rye Brook Police Department in February 2020. P.O. Lazala previously worked for the New York State Park Police and was stationed in Roberto Clemente State Park in New York City.

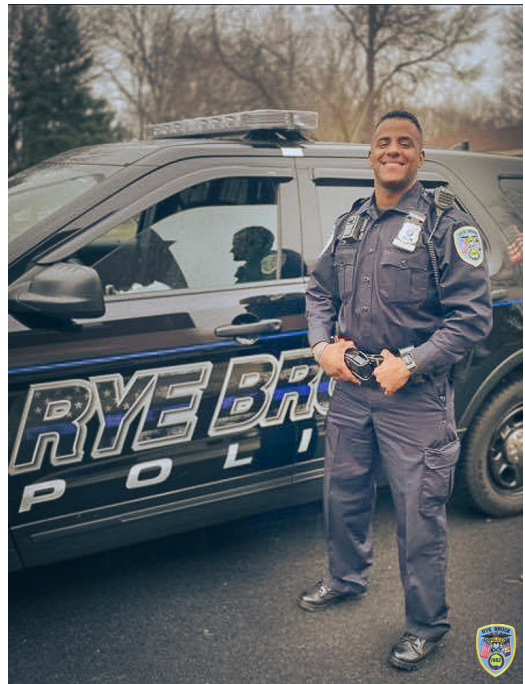
In March 2020, Police Officer Neil Moore retired from the Rye Brook Police Department. P.O. Moore began his career with the New York City Police Department transferring to the New Rochelle Police Department before joining the Rye Brook Police Department in 2006.

In May 2020, Police Officer Jason Brown joined the Rye Brook Police Department. Prior to Rye Brook, P.O. Brown was a police officer with SUNY University Police at Stonybrook.

We are excited to have these officers among our ranks and we wish P.O. Moore a long, happy healthy retirement. Look for Neil Moore in 2021 in his new food truck, Neil's on Wheels!



P.O. Neil Moore (r) with Chief Greg Austin
on his retirement day



P. O. Orelvis Lazala



P.O. Jason Brown

Milestones

In September 2020 Sergeant James Mitchell celebrated 40 years of service with the Rye Brook Police Department. Sgt Mitchell joined the Rye Town Police Department on September 11, 1980 and continued with the newly formed Rye Brook Police Department in 1983 when the new Village of Rye Brook assumed services from the Town of Rye.

In February 2021, Sgt Mitchell retired, and we wish him a long happy and healthy retirement.



Professional Association Memberships

Many officers serve in leadership positions in state and local professional associations. Chief Austin is a member of the Board of Governors of the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police and is the Chair of the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Council.

Sgt Eric Dengler is a member of the Board of Governors of the New York State Juvenile Officers Association and President of the Westchester County Youth Officers Association.

Chief Austin and Det Dengler are also members of the Blind Brook Community Coalition.

DARE

Unfortunately, in 2020 due to the pandemic, we were unable to finish the DARE program at BMP/Ridge Street School which was about halfway completed when the pandemic hit. The Rye Brook Police Department is committed to continuing teaching DARE to our students, and we resumed the program for the 2020/21 school year. We hope for the students that missed DARE in 2020 to participate in the program in Middle School when they reach 8th grade.



P.O. Daniel Bruno teaching DARE

Goals and Objectives

To ensure continual direction and unity of purpose the Department sets annual written goals and objectives. Contribution to the management and operation of the department by all members is encouraged and input from the officers in the development of the Department goals and objectives are always welcome. Each year, the Department Administration meets with the first line supervisors to set the Department goals and objectives for the upcoming year and to evaluate the Goals and Objectives from the previous year.

Additionally, New York State Executive Order 203 issued in June of 2020 requires each police department to meet with the public and to develop a plan to reinvent and reimagine policing in their communities.

The Rye Brook Police Reform Committee met from September 2020 until March 2021 and developed a comprehensive police reform plan. Items from the reform plan will be referenced when defining goals and objectives for the Department.

Below you will find the goals and objectives set for 2020 and their results along with the goals and objectives that the Department will work toward in 2021.

2020 Goals

1. **Form a committee to be chaired by the Lieutenant and comprised of police officers to research viable alternatives/improvements to the Department radio system.**

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were not able to move forward with this goal. The Rye Brook Police Reform plan does address this issue.

2. **Update the Department active shooter policy to reflect current best practices, set up Code Red so it will be available to communicate with the community if needed.**

Code Red (the village mass calling system) was set up if a call back for the Department members is needed. Again, due to COVID-19, there were no available venues for the Department to use for training to accompany any elements contained in an updated policy.

ALERRT training for the entire Department is being planned in 2021, if this is accomplished, the Department will have a basis to update the Active Shooter plan.

3. **Hold “Coffee with a Cop” community outreaches in 2020.**

<http://coffeewithacop.com/>

With no public venues open for any type of gatherings, no Coffee with a Cop community outreaches were held.

During meetings with the Police Reform Committee feedback was received that the public would like to see more community outreach programs such as Coffee with a Cop (see 2021 goals below).

4. **Gather items that reflect Department history from retired officers to create a display in Headquarters.**

Lt. Arnold is continuing to work on this project and has collected many items of historical value that will be eventually put on display.

2021 Goals

1. **Develop a Community Outreach plan that the public can interact more with the Department members in a positive manner including but not limited to:**
 - Conduct Civilian Response to Active Shooter Event (CRASE) workshops for the community.
 - Hold Coffee with a cop in person events and if we are unable to due to COVID-19 restrictions try to have a virtual get together.
 - Take advantage of Social Media to interact with the public in a positive way. Get more involvement from members of the Department.
 - Develop a First Contact program for residents who are new to the community.
2. **Develop a Peer Review Process whenever officers are involved in a high stress incident or when such a review would be a good opportunity for training.**
3. **Make the process for the public to report complaints about Department members more transparent and easier to accomplish.**
4. **Develop a Scenario Based in-service training class which would eventually lead Reality based training for Department members.**
5. **Develop a Mayors' Challenge Health and Wellness program for Department members.**

Equipment Acquisitions

Stationary License Plate Reader

In August 2020, Westchester County deployed a fixed license plate reader (LPR) at the intersection of King Street and North Ridge Street. This is the first LPR of a multi-unit project aimed at installing LPR's at key locations in the village.

The objective of this project is to deploy permanently fixed license plate readers (LPR) throughout the village for the purpose of identifying and locating criminal offenders. These LPRs will augment the current mobile LPR utilized by the police department and will provide added value as the data captured from fixed LPRs will be the result of strategic deployment rather than random data captures that our mobile unit provides.

Noteworthy Incidents

Police Department Accreditation

The Rye Brook Police Department is an Accredited police department by the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). We were first accredited in 2015 and in 2020 we were due for reassessment. Due to the pandemic, our assessment was postponed several months from April to October when we successfully were awarded reaccreditation.

Accreditation is an intensive process that is ongoing each day by each police officer. It is more than documentation, to be successful, the Department cannot just "Talk the Talk", we must "Walk the Walk".

Being an accredited police department has been beneficial in many ways, but most importantly, we found that many reform measures were already part of our daily operations when we examined our procedures during the Reform and Reinvention meetings.

Our next assessment will be in 2025.

Stolen Vehicle Arrest

In October, we were notified by Harrison Police Department that they were chasing a stolen vehicle northbound on the Hutchinson River Parkway. Officer Able Taveras, responded to the North Ridge Street exit of Hutchinson River Parkway where he was told by a motorist that the stolen car had crashed on the Hutch and the occupants had fled into the Country Ridge Drive area.

Ridge Street School was notified and went into lockdown until the suspects could be located.

After an extensive search by officers from the Rye Brook Police, Harrison Police, Port Chester Police, Rye Police, Westchester County Police, and Harrison Police Department K-9 unit, the suspects were located and taken into custody.

Larceny / Drug Arrest Ulta Beauty (Port Chester, NY)

In December, a larceny was reported at Ulta Beauty on the Boston Post Road in Port Chester. Port Chester Police Department broadcasted a description of the suspects and the vehicle the suspects driving and shortly afterwards, P.O. Able Taveras, and P.O. Dan Bruno located the suspect vehicle and stopped it on South Ridge Street.

The vehicle occupants were identified by the witnesses as being responsible for the larceny and were placed under arrest.

After an inventory search of the vehicle, drugs were found which led to additional charges.

P.O. Titus Alexander becomes the Rye Brook Police Motorcycle Officer

In September 2020, Police Officer Titus Alexander attended police motorcycle training at the Yonkers Police Department. Officers who attend this intense two-week school learn proper techniques to handle a motorcycle for traffic control, traffic enforcement and motorcycle safety.

If you see P.O. Alexander on the “Bike” do not forget to give him a wave.



Christmas at Maria Fareri Children's Hospital

Officers from the Rye Brook Police Department joined together with many other agencies to light up the night outside of Maria Fareri Children's Hospital.



