

Guilford Police Department



The Guilford Police Department was created circa 1903 when residents were asked to approve funding for an officer who was to, “Enforce the prohibitory laws”, and also funding for the prosecution of violators of those laws in the Village of Guilford.

In 1907 the residents approved the, “Purchase, rent or building”, of a ‘lockup’ to house the department and build a ‘steel cage’, or cell, to hold prisoners within the lockup.

In 1908 the Town funded an individual to act as the ‘Night Watchman’ for the Village of Guilford for the purpose of enforcing the laws, thus creating what was known as the ‘Guilford Night Watch’ to be employed for a specific number of months throughout the year. In the years to follow the schedule of the officer(s) was left up to the Board of Selectmen and ultimately became a year-round, part-time position. In 1916 the residents began to fund a meager budget for the ‘patrol’ division, continuing to call it the night watch.

In 1947, for the first time, the department was referred to as the ‘police department’ in the town warrant articles. At this time the residents voted on a police budget that was comparable to the fire service budget. The town also began referring to police officers as constables, a term that pre dated the town records of 1900 when constables were first appointed for various duties within the village. At times the Town of Guilford enjoyed having upwards of 20 or more constables on staff performing various duties for the town, including the night watch patrol.

In fiscal year 1979-1980 a set of Articles (Local Ordinance of Laws) was enacted to include an Article which stated that the Sheriff’s Department, Constables of Guilford (Police) and the State Police would together enforce the local and state laws within the town. It would be later in the 1980’s when law enforcement recruitment was strong that the Town of Guilford would enter into a Gentlemen’s Agreement with the Piscataquis Sheriff’s Department and the sheriff would staff the Guilford Police with commissioned deputies, however the option was open to appoint any police officer that had the proper training and credentials to serve as a law enforcement officer. By 1989 the department had a solid budget approved by the voters of Guilford and in 1990 the town purchased their first and very own police cruiser. At that time the vehicle was lettered in the manner of other sheriff’s department vehicles as they were solely staffing the 24 hours per week the department was performing with off-duty deputies, however the department did and has always remained the Guilford Police Department, funded solely and directly by the residents of the Town of Guilford.

Sadly, at the turn of the century the State, County and local police departments began to experience a decline in the recruitment of qualified officers and this has remained on the decline to this day. Over the past several years the sheriff's department has had its own challenges with staffing, let alone the responsibility of the weekly staffing of the Guilford Patrol. Over the past several years' law enforcement has seen officers that have retired with few qualified professionals to fill the vacancies, especially in rural areas such as Piscataquis County. However, through this the Guilford Patrol has persisted and carried on to the best of its abilities through dedicated law professionals who have had the goal to see the residents of Guilford being served.

In July of this year the Guilford Police Department will experience a 'makeover' with the goal of revitalization. The Police Department, which has been in existence for over 100 years will look different however will continue with the same goals of adding extra security to the residents and maintain partnerships with other local law enforcement agencies. Residents will see their cruiser, which was purchased in 2014, bearing the name of the Town of Guilford on the side and local emblems bearing the title of 'Police Department'. Officers will also be wearing the Guilford Police insignia as well. The department will have the same goals of enhancing the coverage provided by the Piscataquis Sheriff's Department through scheduled shifts totaling 24 hours per week. Residents will continue to dial 911 in emergencies or 564-3304 for non-emergency calls that will be routed through the Piscataquis Sheriff's Department and the appropriate agency will respond to those requests for service. The Guilford Patrol will enhance area law enforcement agencies through Mutual Aid partnerships and the department will continue to employ officers who have received the proper training and certification through the Maine Criminal Justice Academy and in most cases are working full or part time for other agencies. Guilford officers will be trained to their highest level through partnerships with the Sheriff's Department and through the state academy. The department currently has a small, but experienced and dedicated staff with one officer who will be attending the full Basic Law Enforcement Training Program at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy this coming fall and a Town Manager/Administrator who has served over 18 years in law enforcement and is a Drug Recognition Expert and Training Officer for the state academy. Anyone having the proper credentials and wishing to join the Guilford Police Department should contact the town office at 876-2202. The Guilford Police Department also welcomes local students of law enforcement who are seeking sponsorship to the Academy's Reserve Officer Training Course and willing to give time to the department once they graduate.

The ultimate goal is to preserve a police department that, in conjunction with other county patrol, offers the Town of Guilford the highest level of service and be as dedicated to the residents as they have been to this small police department for over 100 years.