



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Avon Lake Police Department

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter From Chief Molnar	3
Organizational Chart	4
Hires & Retires	5
Promotions	8
Community Relations	9
Education and Training	10
Specialized Units	11
Detective Bureau	12
OVI Task Force	13
School Resource Officers	13
K9 Unit	14
Animal Control Community Service Officers (ACCSO)	14
Patrol and Calls for Service	15
Calls for Service and Case Reports	15
Traffic Stats	16
Noteworthy Events	17

# LETTER FROM CHIEF MOLNAR

The year 2020 was a year of challenge and change for the Avon Lake Police Department and it will be remembered for a long time to come. The COVID-19 virus brought us plenty of changes. Social distancing, curfews, virtual meetings, and wearing a mask became normal behavior. In the midst of this, the Avon Lake Police Department saw the retirements of Chief Streater, Lt. Fishburn, Sgt. Rightnour, and Ptlm. Rinker. The retirements presented those who remained the challenge of moving forward without their leadership and experience.

Mayor Zilka appointed Lt. Sean Bockelman as Acting Chief and he provided steady direction during the beginning period of the pandemic when there was plenty of uncertainty and the best course of action wasn't always clear. Chief Streater was available for consultation as he remained a phone call away after accepting the Safety Director position in neighboring Avon. The promotional process ran through the summer and led to my appointment as Chief in September. The time required to fill in the gaps created by my promotion, as well as filling the vacant Patrolmen positions, stretched into 2021.

It's natural during the annual report process to look back and ask how we managed to negotiate the challenges and changes of the year. Sticking to the basics and prioritizing the important tasks is one of the steps we took. Remembering the values that serve us well as individuals and a police department is another. Making yourself available to others, assisting them in their time of need, and not being afraid to ask for help yourself are other rules to live by.

Throughout my career, the leaders of the Avon Lake Police Department have been teaching the important core values of Professionalism, Knowledge, Honesty, and Service. As a new chief, I view it as my responsibility to continue that tradition. Training the newly promoted and newly hired in the skills and mind-set necessary to meet the needs of the community will be my top priority. Working to re-establish regular interaction with the public as the coronavirus restrictions are lifted is another priority. Continually learning about the concerns of the community through these interactions helps us to prioritize our services. It also allows us to directly communicate crime trends, share news, and promote safety and security. We are your police department and we need your help to keep Avon Lake a safe place.

Sincerely,

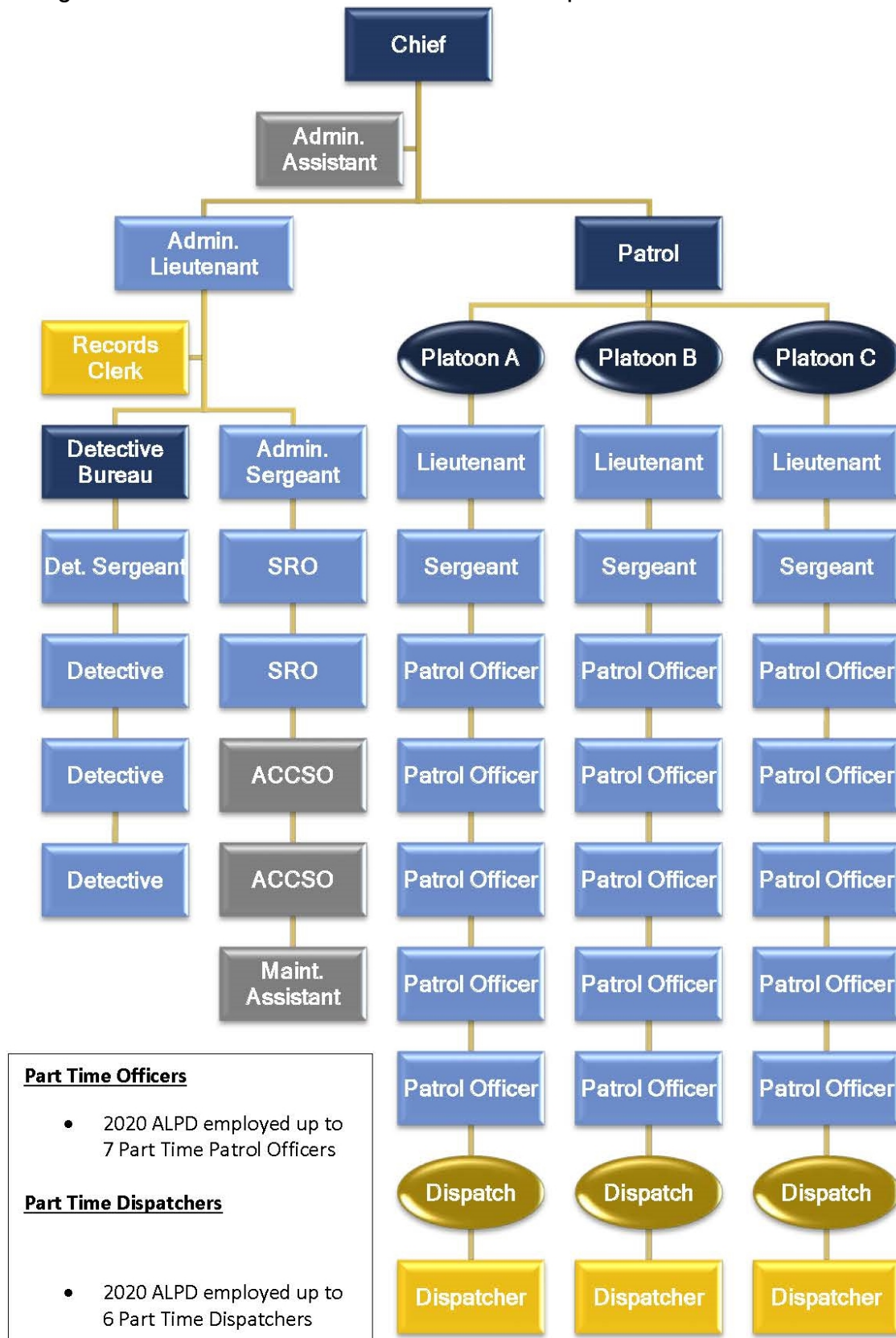


Vincent E. Molnar  
Chief of Police  
City of Avon Lake



# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

In 2020 the Avon Lake Police Department experienced a high volume of staff turnover due to scheduled retirements and new hires. As a result one organizational chart listing names and ranks for the year would not accurately depict the makeup of our department. The chart below reflects the general structure of the Avon Lake Police Department.





# HIRES & RETIRES



Chief Duane Streater served the people of Avon Lake through the Police Department for nearly 32 years. He became Chief of Police in 2014, before leaving the department in April of 2020.

Chief Streater's emphasis on community policing was exemplified in the many programs he oversaw to build strong bonds and dialogue between the men and women of the department and the citizens of Avon Lake.



Lieutenant Scott Fishburn retired in May of 2020 after serving the department for over 30 years, 20 of which were at the rank of Lieutenant. During his time with ALPD he served as part of the Command Staff with the Lorain County SWAT. His duties also included managing the department's computer & server systems, was a range/firearms instructor. Lieutenant Fishburn served as Administrative Lieutenant for the last 6 years.

After serving the Avon Lake Police Department for nearly 22 years, Sergeant Victoria Rightnour retired from ALPD in February 2020. Throughout her career, Sgt. Rightnour served this department as a patrol officer, detective, Platoon Sergeant, and as Administrative Sergeant. As part of her duties as Administrative Sergeant, Sgt. Rightnour oversaw and streamlined one of our Department's most popular programs, the Community Police Academy.



Officer Shawn Rinker served the Avon Lake Police Department for over 26 years before retiring in June 2020. Over the course of his career with ALPD, Officer Rinker has served as a K-9 Officer, Detective, Field Training Officer, Senior Range/Firearms Instructor, worked with the Lorain County Drug Task Force, and as an operator with the Lorain County SWAT Team.

## HIRES & RETIRES CONTINUED



Part Time Patrol Officer Elizabeth Reese retired from ALPD in August 2020 after serving our community for over 16 years.



Part Time Dispatcher Kathleen Starkey served ALPD for over 10 years before retiring in April 2020.



Part Time Dispatcher Dawn Lucey retired from ALPD in September 2020 after serving the department for over 24 years.

## HIRES & RETIRES CONTINUED



Officer Nicholas Blankenship was sworn in as an Avon Lake Police Department Patrol Officer in March of 2020.



Officer Jeremy Weissinger was sworn in as an Avon Lake Police Department Patrol Officer in August of 2020.





# PROMOTIONS

In September of 2020 Vince Molnar was sworn in as the Avon Lake Police Department's new Chief of Police. Chief Molnar has 25 years of experience with the department. He was hired to the department in the fall of 1995, promoted to Sergeant in 2001, and promoted to Lieutenant in 2013.



In February of 2020 Tom Anadiotis was sworn in and promoted to the position of Sergeant. Sgt. Anadiotis is a 19 year veteran of the Avon Lake Police Department.

In April 2020 Alex Giardini was sworn in and promoted from Sergeant to Lieutenant. Lt. Giardini is a 23 year veteran of the department and was promoted to Sergeant in 2001.



James Valencic was sworn in and promoted to the position of Sergeant in April 2020. Sgt. Valencic is a 13 year veteran of the Avon Lake Police Department.



# COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Avon Lake Police Department strives to maintain a strong relationship with our community members.

In previous years the department has enjoyed a full schedule of programs and events to keep us in contact with and educating the citizens we serve. Unfortunately due to restrictions caused by COVID-19 these programs had to be suspended for the year. Avon Lake Police Department has continued to use social media to answer questions, post news, and send out alerts to our community. Through our department's Facebook and Twitter accounts we have been able to maintain our dialogue with the public.

The Avon Lake Police Department looks forward to being able to restart programs like the ones listed below in 2021. These programs and events promote safety education, encourage interest in law enforcement, notify the public of events or safety issues, and boost an open dialogue and relationship with the public we serve.

- 🛡️ Big Trucks
- 🛡️ Avon Lake Safety Town
- 🛡️ Safety Fairs & bike rodeos
- 🛡️ Police Explorers
- 🛡️ Social media posts and messaging
- 🛡️ Community Police Academy
- 🛡️ Burglary Prevention Patrols
- 🛡️ Scout Tours
- 🛡️ Child ID Card program
- 🛡️ Ice cream rewards for helmets
- 🛡️ Food Truck Lunches with the public

In 2020 the citizens and business of Avon Lake displayed support and generosity to our department and officers. During a time when certain things were much needed and hard to come by residents and businesses delivered food, cleaning supplies, masks, cards, and sanitizing services.


















We continued our Department's tradition of collecting food, clothing, toys, and other essentials for the Community Resource Service's annual Santa's workshop program. Thanks to the generosity of our staff and the citizens of Avon Lake we were able to collect enough food and items to fill our truck 5 times for deliveries to CRS. All items collected went to individuals and families in our community. ALPD participated in Holidays with Hometown Heroes distributing gifts to local families and took part various vehicle parades throughout the City for birthdays and holidays in 2020. Officers also raised money for Smiles for Sophie and Prayers from Maria through our No Shave November / December program.



# EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Due to restrictions related to COVID 19 some of the scheduled trainings for ALPD were cancelled for the safety of the officers and instructors. However with class size reductions, interactive video instruction, and online trainings our department was able to maintain our standard of continued education for officers and dispatchers, some of these trainings are listed below. Avon Lake Police Department also benefited from having officers certified as trainers in various areas. These officers were able to host classes and give instruction to other members of our department.

-  ALICE Instructor
-  First Line Supervision
-  Physical Fitness Specialist
-  Lexipol Daily Training Bulletins
-  Homicide Investigation & Crime Scene Management
-  Basic Police Academy
-  Range Qualifications
-  Field Training Officer Instructor School
-  Northern Ohio Arson Seminar
-  Arson Investigation
-  De-escalation
-  Gordon Graham - Risk Management
-  Cell Phone use in Drug Investigations
-  Beyond the Silence
-  Scenario Based Training Instructor

# SPECIALIZED UNITS



<b>Detective Bureau:</b>	Det. Sgt. Reikowski, Det. Robinson, Det. Ludwig, Det. Godlewski
<b>K-9 Unit:</b>	PtIm. Rudduck, K-9 Ady
<b>OVI Task Force:</b>	Sgt. Giardini, PtIm. Schleicher, PtIm. Anadiotis, PtIm. Seekins, PtIm. Godlewski, PtIm. Walborn, PtIm. Melda, PtIm. Yonkers
<b>School Resource Officers:</b>	SRO Hurd, SRO Walborn
<b>Motor Unit:</b>	Sgt. Carrender, PtIm. Biczynowski, Det. Ludwig, PtIm. Riggs
<b>Bike Patrol:</b>	Sgt. Carrender, PtIm. Toth, PtIm. Hurd, PtIm. Biczynowski, PtIm. Bringman, Det. Godlewski, PtIm. Valencic, PtIm. Walborn, PtIm. Fabrizi, PtIm. Melda
<b>Animal Control Community Service Officers:</b>	ACCSO Hartz, ACCSO Wasylo
<b>Lorain County SWAT:</b>	Lt. Bockelman, Lt. Tibbitts, PtIm. Rinker, PtIm. Schleicher
<b>Honor Guard:</b>	Lt. Tibbitts, Sgt. Carrender, Sgt. Cantleberry, PtIm. Schleicher, PtIm. Toth, Det. Robinson, PtIm. Valencic, PtIm. Fabrizi, PtIm. Ody, PtIm. Riggs, PtIm. Melda, PtIm. Yonkers
<b>Northern Ohio Violent Fugitive Task Force</b>	Det. Robinson, Det. Ludwig, Det. Godlewski



# SPECIALIZED UNITS CONTINUED

## Detective Bureau

The Avon Lake Detective Bureau is comprised of Det. Sgt. Reikowski, Det. Robinson, and Det. Ludwig, and Det. Godlewski. Members of the Bureau are available for call-in 24 hours a day, seven days a week for serious crimes. Our Detectives have received formal training in the following areas: Core Criminal Investigation, Homicide Investigation, Beyond the Silence (recognizing an investigating abuse of children), Crime Scene Photography, Evidence Technician, Cellular Phone Forensic Analysis, and others.

Detectives assist the patrol division with any cases that require extensive follow-up and investigation. Members of this unit are also responsible for maintaining and securing our department's Evidence Processing and Evidence Storage rooms. Part of this duty includes receiving, processing, and storing evidence including criminal tools, narcotics, digital media, etc. in addition to maintaining a detailed chain of custody for these items to ensure the integrity of a piece of evidence should it be needed in court.

Our Detectives maintain strong collaborative relationships with other North East Ohio Law Enforcement Agencies. Crime trends and BOLOs are shared daily with Lorain and Cuyahoga County Agencies. Detectives also interact regularly with municipal and county prosecutors and judges and testify as needed in these courts. Detectives are involved in the application and service of arrest warrants or search warrants needed for criminal cases.

## 2020 Noteworthy Detective Bureau Cases

**Detective Robinson** worked a case where an employee at an assisting living facility was taking photos of residents and sending them out via phone. After conducting interviews and a forensic examination of the suspect's phone, charges were brought against the involved party. Detective Robinson has been a member of the bureau for 6 years, 3 of those years he was Lead Detective. In 2020 Detective Robinson ranked highest in the Sergeant's promotional examinations. In anticipation of his promotion to Platoon Sergeant, Detective Robinson was reassigned to road patrol duties in October.

**Detective Ludwig** worked an auto theft case in which the car was recovered in an east side suburb. As the lead investigator on this case, he spearheaded tasks such as processing the recovered vehicle for latent evidence. Detective Ludwig sent spent shell casings and cigarette butts recovered from the vehicle out to be forensically analyzed. While no links were immediately made with other similar crimes, evidence is continually compared with new submissions in the respective labs (BCI&I and ATF). Should matches be made by the labs, the case will progress further with the new found information. Knowledge of the resources available to our city has and will continue to aid ALPD and our investigations.

## Detective Bureau Continued

**Detective Godlewski** worked a theft case in which a subject posed as a contractor specializing in flooring, received electronic deposit payments from the victims, then did not perform any of the agreed upon labor. Detective Godlewski subpoenaed digital payment platforms (i.e. Venmo) and after analyzing the data recovered from these subpoenas he collaborated with patrol officers, developed probable cause, and issued an arrest warrant for the suspect.

**Detective Sergeant Reikowski** is the supervisor of the Detective Bureau. In addition to investigating his own case load Sgt. Reikowski assigns cases to the detectives in the bureau. He assists the other detectives as needed with their investigations, maintains information sharing and collaboration with other area police departments, and ensures that the department is aware of high priority investigations within the City of Avon Lake and the surrounding communities.

## OVI Task Force

COVID-19 significantly impacted the OVI Task Force operations in 2020. Due to stay-at-home orders and closures of bars and restaurants, vehicular traffic volume was significantly reduced. The reduced traffic combined with efforts to reduce unnecessary exposure to COVID resulted in a reduction in the number of hours solely dedicated to the OVI task force operations.

While the Lorain County OVI Task Force was not able to have as many saturation patrols and check points throughout the county as in previous years, concentrated patrols by our officers within the City continued. In 2020 ALPD made 26 OVI arrests and citations, this total is only slightly less than the total in 2019 which was 33.

## School Resource Officers

2020 presented many new and unique challenges for SRO Hurd and SRO Walborn. On March 17<sup>th</sup> all Avon Lake City School District classes transitioned to online classes for the remainder of the school year. During this time the SROs were assigned to work road patrols as they do in the summers when school is not in session.

Schools resumed with an option of in person classes in August. To accommodate social distancing requirements schools in the city had to make adjustments. For example Learwood Middle School added an annex building renting space across the street at The Church of the Open Door. SROs assisted throughout the City adjusting and directing traffic flows to ease some of the issues caused by increased traffic and busing restrictions around the schools.

The SROs continue to engage and build relationships with students around the district. They can be found in the classroom discussing a variety of topics with students as part of their class work. Outside of the classroom, they continue to foster these relationships by speaking to various groups such as Scouts and PTA. As part of their continuing education in 2020, SROs participated in a variety of trainings to include Mental Health First Aid, Online ALICE Training, and Beyond the Silence (juvenile victim interview methods).

## K9 Unit

Officer Rudduck and K9 Ady began their 9<sup>th</sup> year as partners in 2020 with Ady turning eleven years old in October. Although K9 usage was down this year due to the pandemic, Officer Rudduck and Ady were still active throughout the City. Officer Rudduck used Ady for traffic stop vehicle sniffs and school sniffs checking lockers, bags, and vehicles. Area searches were done and a building search of a home for a felony suspect. K9 Ady located this suspect hidden in the home, the suspect was taken into custody without harm to officers or the suspect.



Officer Rudduck and K9 Ady were able to participate in community meet and greets throughout the year and look forward to continuing to serve the residents of Avon Lake in 2021.

## Animal Control Community Service Officers (ACCSO)

ACCSOs Hartz and Wasylo responded to 412 calls for service during the year of 2020. The ACCSOs maintain and review all of the designated dogs in Avon Lake. In the past year, 3 dogs were added to the City's designation list. 1 dog was removed from the list in 2020 after a review was completed by the ACCSOs that the owner had satisfactorily complied with all requirements. Found dogs are a large part of the responsibilities of the ACCSOs. In 2020, 32 dogs were placed in the City's kennel. Of those 32 all were returned to their owners except one which was released into the care of a shelter to be adopted into a new home. These numbers are in addition to occurrences where a dog is found, is properly tagged or chipped, and the Officer is able to return the dog to its owner without holding in the City's kennel. In addition to found animals, ACCSOs also handle other animal complaints to include, Dog At Large, Barking Dogs/Noise Complaints, animal welfare checks, and concerns involving both domestic and wild animals.



June 2020 - Volunteers from St. Joe's worked with the ACCSOs to clean the City's Kennel and improve the landscaping.

ACCSOs also assist the police department by responding to vehicle and residential lock outs, motorist assistance, traffic control, residential vacation house watches, and community events and education.



# PATROL AND CALLS FOR SERVICE

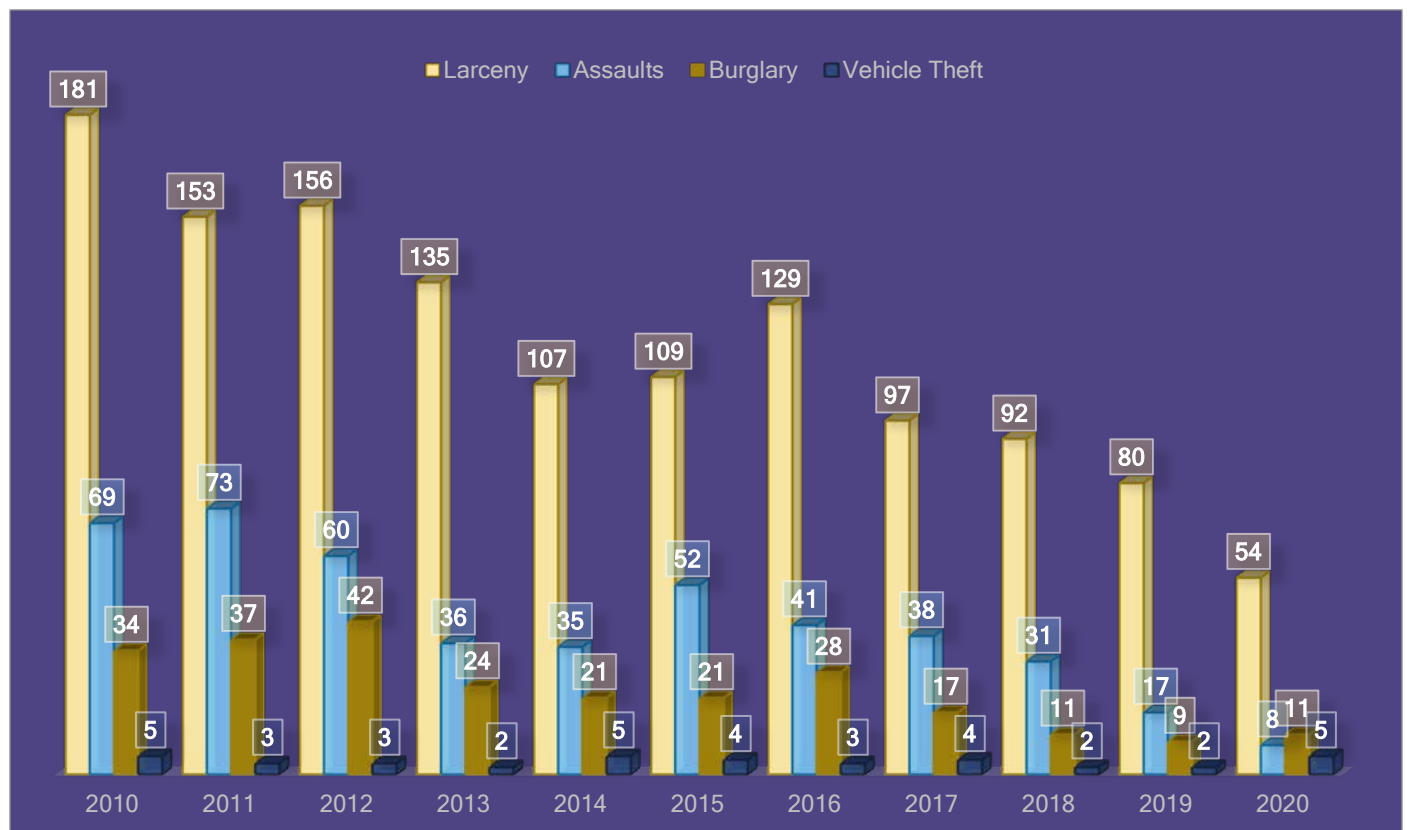
## Calls for Service and Case Reports

In 2020 the Avon Lake Police Department had a total of 8,764 Calls for Service. Of these Calls for Service 655 resulted in a Case Report. Burglaries increased slightly going from 9 cases in 2019 to 11 total cases in 2020. Total number of Larceny and Assaults continued their downward trend resulting in the lowest number of occurrences in over 10 years. Avon Lake Police Department has continued our campaign of increased social media alerts and citizen education on how to best safeguard property as well as increased patrols and residential checks to help protect the public from property crimes.

Domestic Violence reports increased by nearly 29% going from 29 in 2019 to 41 in 2020. According to a survey conducted by the Ohio Domestic Violence Network, more than half of the state's domestic violence programs reported an increase in survivors seeking shelter, hotline calls, and other requests for services throughout the State of Ohio in 2020. Avon Lake Police Officers and Dispatchers are trained in de-escalation and provide survivors with contacts and information to area resources for assistance.

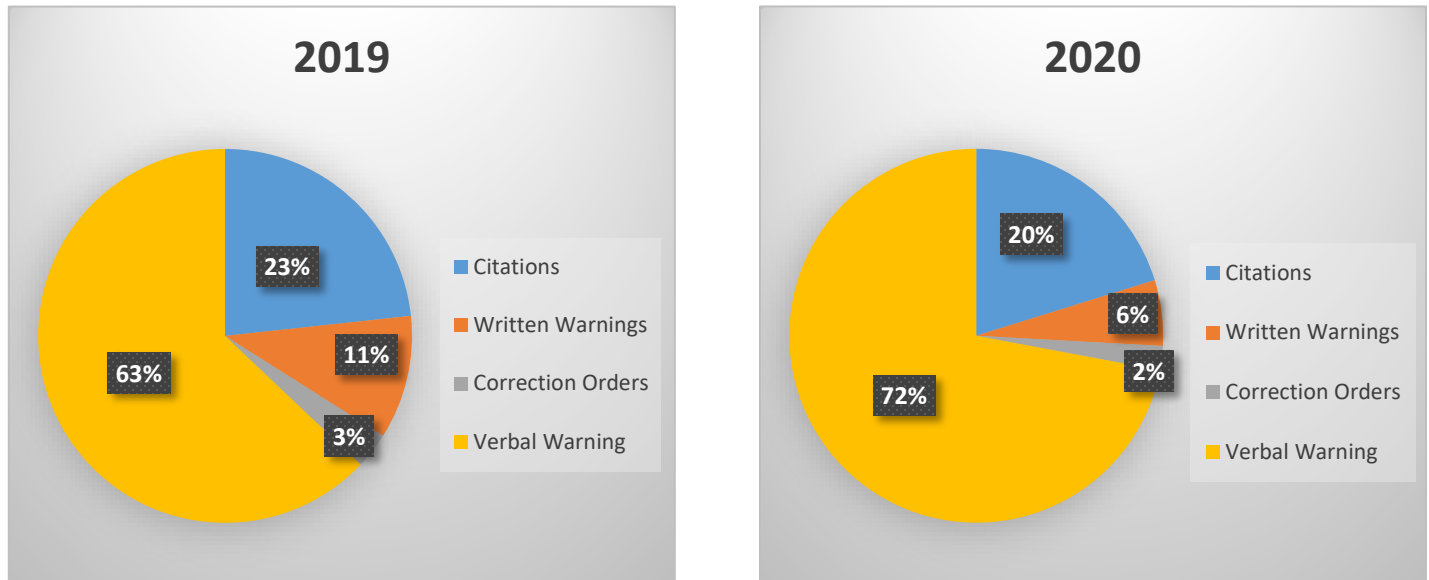
Vehicle Thefts increased slightly to 5 from the total of 2 in 2019 but remained within the 2-5 total of incidents the City has seen of this type over the past 10 years.

After a brief spike in Arrest totals in 2018 and 2019, the 2020 total of 152 returned to a level near to what we saw in 2017 (159).



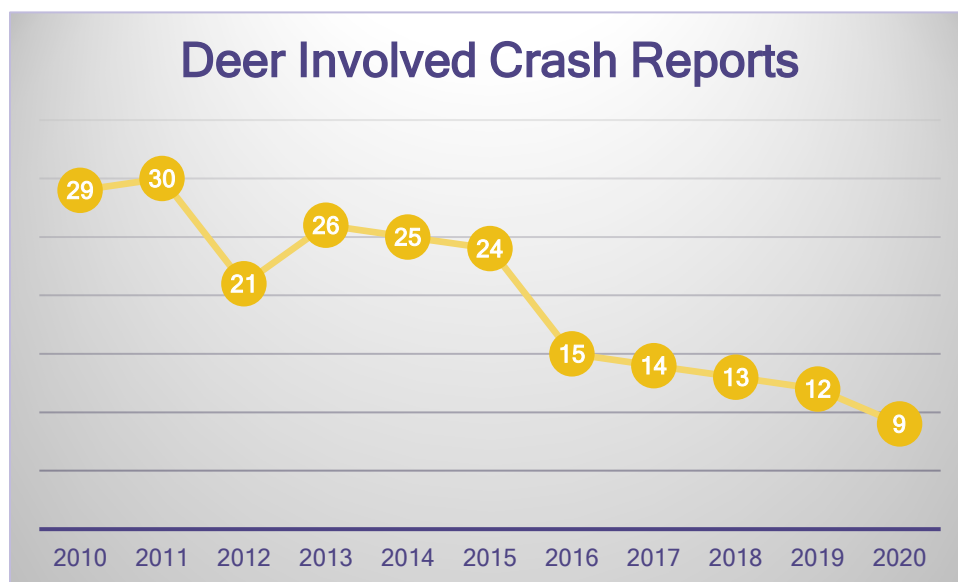
## Traffic Stats

Traffic enforcement is a large part of a patrol officer's duties. In 2020, Officers initiated a total of 946 traffic stops. Of those stops, 18 resulted in arrests. Percentages of what traffic stops resulted in citations, written warnings, correction orders, and verbal warnings remained relatively consistent with the 2019 stats. These percentages can be compared in the charts below.



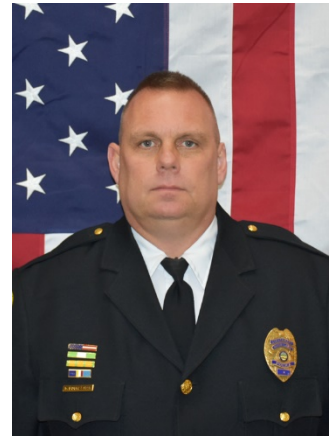
Property Damage Only Traffic crash reports decreased by 28% from 2019. Crash reports that resulted in an injury totaled 22. This was the same total of injury accidents as in 2019.

There were 9 deer involved vehicle crashes reports filed at the Police Department in 2020. None of these incidents resulted in an injury being reported. This reflects a 10 year low in deer involved crash reports filed with the police department.



# NOTEWORTHY EVENTS

In the spring of 2020 Executive Lieutenant Scott Fishburn retired and Chief Streater left the department. Lt. Sean Bockelman as the highest ranking Lieutenant took over the position of Executive Lieutenant and stood in as Acting Chief of the Avon Lake Police Department while the department went through the process of interviews and evaluations for a new chief. As Acting Chief, it was Lt. Bockelman's responsibility to oversee the entire department and maintain communications and continuity between the police and other city management. His efforts during a time when our department was in transition with a high number of retirements as well as dealing with the unprecedented events of COVID 19 were an asset to the department and the City of Avon Lake.



In November 2020, Chief Molnar and shift Lt. Tibbitts presented Officer Schleicher with Badge One (1). This honor signifies the most senior patrol officer. Officer Schleicher has dedicated over 25 years of service to this agency and the citizens of Avon Lake.

PtIm. Robinson and PtIm Blankenship received letters of commendation for their joint enforcement actions which resulted in the seizure of 3 firearms from two separate incidents in August and September of 2020. Their decisive and professional actions resulted in multiple felony arrests and removed 3 firearms from the streets of Avon Lake.



In appreciation of his years of dedication to range training, firearms safety and instruction, and to the upkeep and maintenance of the Avon Lake Police Department outdoor firing range, ALPD dubbed our range "Rinker's Range".