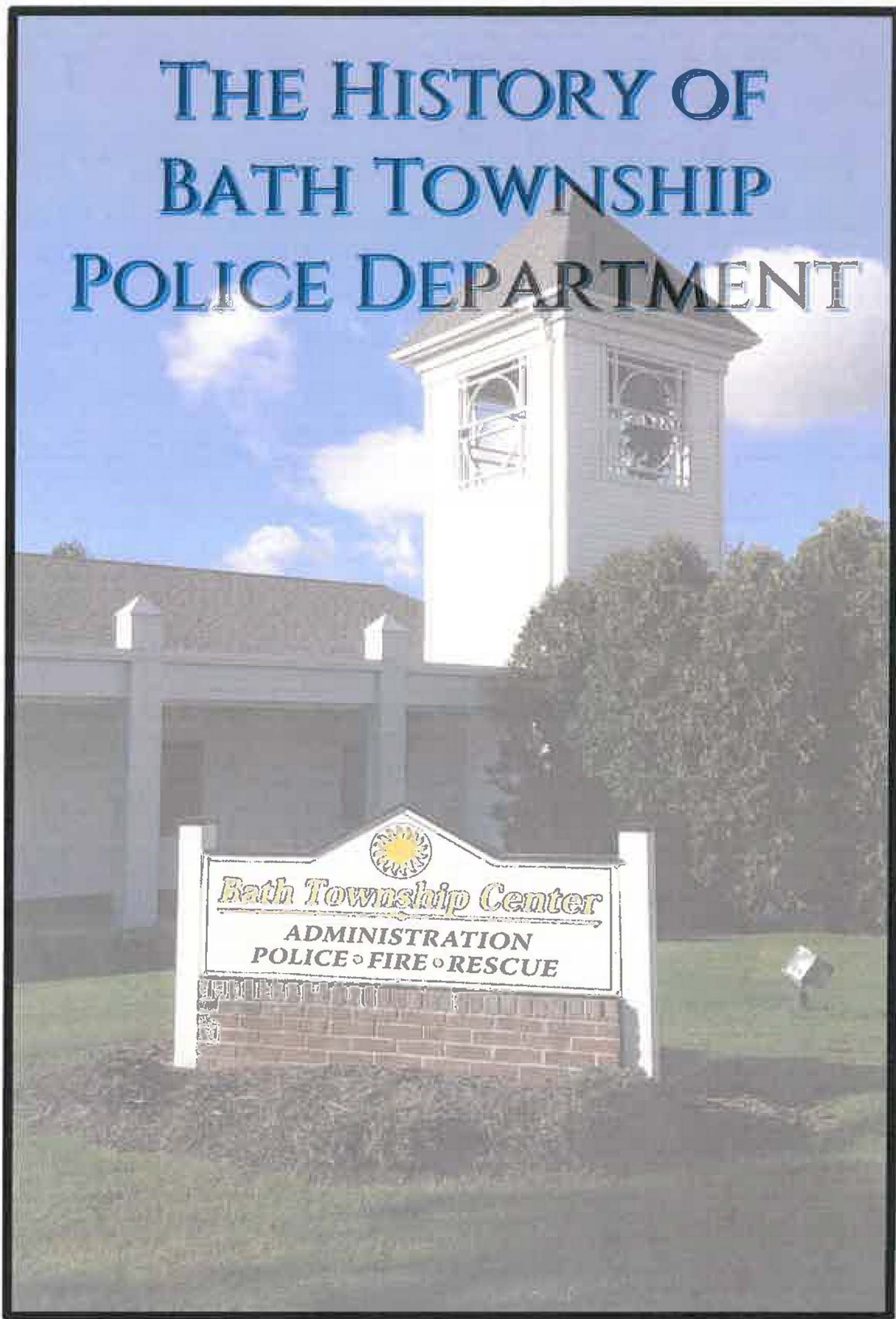


THE HISTORY OF BATH TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT



A special note of appreciation and acknowledgment to retired Detective Lieutenant Richard W. Munsey for his time and insight to helping prepare much of the information contained in this document. His years of dedication to the Bath Police and the field of criminal investigation are unparalleled.

BATH TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT HISTORY AND HIGHLIGHTS

1961 – AND SO, IT BEGINS..

In the fall of 1961, due to the long response time by the Summit County Sheriff's Department to answer a distress call in Bath Township, several residents formed a volunteer organization. The newly formed eight-member police department were sworn in as "constables"; of the eight, seven were residents and one external member, Harold Hood, was commissioned by the Summit County Sheriff. The seven resident "constables" were Harold Egbert, Nate Hensel, Gale Epling, Bob Cole, Roy Carr, Leo Main, and Dick Leicht. Within the next year, two more residents joined the force to include Roy Kochel and Bill Gravis. The members were given \$50 to buy uniforms and equipment. They patrolled the Township and answered calls using their own vehicles and gasoline. Citizen band radios were used for two-way communication. Meetings were held once a week at a small building on Ira Road across from the old Post Office.

By 1963, the Bath Police Department became an official division of Summit County Sheriff's Office after Township Trustees signed a contract with Sheriff Bob Campbell. Bob Cole, one of the founding volunteers, served as the Chief of Police from 1963 to 1964. The remaining volunteer members were sworn in as deputy sheriffs and received a uniform and shared one cruiser; a 1963 Ford which was a marked sheriff's cruiser. The trustees hired two of the volunteer officers on a part-time basis, Gale Epling and Bill Gravis. When the cruiser was not manned by either the part-time officers or the volunteers, the Sheriff's Department continued to answer calls within the Township. The next Chief of Police was Roy C. Carr who stayed in that position from 1964 to 1967.


The police call for services statistics for 1967 included 500 incident reports taken of which ninety-eight were "code 2" – property damage and fifty were "code 4" – personal injury. Volunteers put in 1,259 hours for the year although statistics may be much higher because data was not recorded for the first quarter of the year.

Significant changes began to happen by 1968. The Sheriff's Department wanted to raise the cost of the annual contract with the Township and this put into motion the decision by the Trustees to form their own Township Police Department. Under the Ohio Revised Code, Bath Township was designated as a fully-functioning police district. At the time, the department had three full-time officers and eleven volunteer officers. The first full-time Police Chief was Robert K. Ferguson who served from 1967 until his retirement in 1979. The Assistant Chief of Police was Bill Gravis. Volunteer hours for 1968 were 1,491 and the number of incident reports taken were 676. In 1969, volunteer hours increased to 1,747 and nine reports of loose cattle occurred that year.

THE 1970'S – INNOVATION AND CHANGES

By the early 1970's, the police department moved into space at the safety building at Bath Township Center. The added space included a squad room, booking room, holding cell, offices and dispatch center. The number of incident reports increased slightly to 855 and ten volunteer recorded a total of 4,601 hours in 1970. There were 41 apprehensions of juveniles and 118 incidents of property damage. Loose cattle continued to be an issue in 1971 with 7 reports and 12 missing juveniles. The full-time staff in 1971 was Chief Ferguson, Assistant Chief Gravis, Captain Lotz, Patrolmen John Gardner and Carl Von Gunten. Nine volunteers continued to patrol the Township;

Lieutenant Roy Carr, Harold Egbert, Nate Hensel, Denny Kemper, Gene Kirschner, Bud Schray, Chuck Schray, Dave Bailey, and Harry Hood. The cadet program began to include John Aukeman, Randy Cox, John Craig, Jerry Fisher, Bill Fragale, Mark Greer, Bob Lynch, Richard Munsey, Dan Peterson, Casey Shepherd, Ellis Solomon, and Mike Zorena. The start-up of the cadets contributed 6,735.5 hours to assisting in various projects to help the department. This is a copy of the By-Laws for Cadets that was developed and distributed to students and their parents.

<p>CHIEF R FERGUSON ASY CHIEF W GRAVIS CAPT J LOTZ</p>	<p>BATH POLICE DEPARTMENT 3864 West Bath Road Akron, Ohio 44313</p> 	<p>TELEPHONE BUS 666-11 EMERG 666-21</p>
<p><u>BY-LAWS FOR BATH POLICE CADETS</u></p>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- In no way is the position you hold with the Bath Police Department to be used for personal gain. 2- <u>ANY</u> information gained from the Police Department will be held in the strictest of confidence. 3- During any detail you are on, you will be responsible to the senior officer on the scene. 4- The dress code layed out by the department will strictly be adhered to. 5- If school grades fall below that that is average for the individual, you will be subject to dismissal until grades are brought back up. 6- You will in no way, by your actions in public, create a bad image that will reflect on the Police Department. 7- You will be required to put in a minimal amount of time per month, meetings, training sessions, special details, etc., as determined by the Chief. 8- You will be subject to call 24 hours a day, in the event of an emergency, emergency situation to be determined by the Chief. 9- Vehicles used by the Cadets will not have permanently mounted red lights or emergency equipment. Portable emergency equipment will be used only upon order of the Chief. 10- It is to be understood by the Cadets that they have absolutely no police powers or authority. (This program is designed only to give the Cadets an opportunity to learn and understand police work and an opportunity to help within our community). 		
<p>I understand a breach of any of the above regulations can mean immediate dismissal from the department.</p>		
<p>Signed _____</p>		

As the number of Township residents grew, so did the number of home security systems. In 1974, a new national safety and security computer alarm panel was added for dispatchers to be able to receive information from alarm companies and send the police

to where the burglar alarm was activated. This system was utilized for a number of years after and just prior to the computer-aided dispatch which changed the way alarms were recorded. By 1976, the number of paid staff had increased and ten patrolmen continued as volunteers while the number of cadets decreased to nine. Some of the original cadets went on to become dispatchers and others, patrolmen. Safety Town, a "how to" program for children entering kindergarten began under the direction of Chief Ferguson at Bath Elementary with the assistance of Detective Sergeant Richard W. Munsey, Officer Michael J. Zorena, and several volunteers. Each year the program grew in numbers of children enrolled and eventually became a week-long morning and afternoon session to accommodate everyone. Another department program, "We Care" was started in the mid-1970's by Chief Ferguson to reach out to the senior citizens of Bath Township and make sure they had daily telephone contact with either a dispatch or police officer staff member. This program continues to exist today with seniors or their family members enrolling online. Chief Ferguson stepped down from his post December 31, 1978. Long-time Bath resident, William O. Gravis, who was part of the original team of volunteers was hired to lead the helm January 1, 1979. He remained Chief until 1994.

The first murder in Bath Township occurred in 1979. The female resident had confronted a delivery man for stealing items out of her garage. The murder was investigated by Detective Sergeant Richard W. Munsey and the suspect confessed to the murder as well as showing Detective Sergeant Richard W. Munsey where the body had been dumped in Medina County.

1980's – A NEW DECADE AND NEW CHALLENGES

The annual report of 1980 reflects a change in staffing; the administrative staff consisted of Chief Gravis, Sergeants Lotz and Gardner, Detective Sergeant Richard W. Munsey, five Reserve Officers – Egbert, Schray, Sansonetti, Bost, and Wilson. Four dispatchers and secretary for the department rounded out the paid staff. During this time, there is no mention of the cadet program; therefore, it is assumed to have discontinued. The murder of Bath resident, Dean Milo on August 11, 1980 made front page news in the Akron Beacon Journal. The lead investigator, Detective Sergeant Richard W. Munsey, spent countless hours following up on leads in the case. It was a twisted tale of family dysfunction resulting in the conviction of Dean's brother, Fred, and a total of eleven individuals were convicted. Law Enforcement Automated Data System [LEADS] provided one terminal for the dispatchers to rely information to the officers by radio. By late 1988, the 9-1-1 emergency system went into effect. Computer-aided dispatch [CAD] was still a few years away from reality.

1990's – GROUND BREAKING MOVES

July 26, 1991 stands out as the beginning of a long investigation into the Steven Hicks murder at the hands of Jeffrey Dahmer. Detective Lieutenant Richard W. Munsey interviewed Jeffrey in Milwaukee, Wisconsin who confessed to killing this person in the summer of 1978 and disposed of his body through dismemberment and throwing the remains in the woods behind his parent's home in Bath Township. The case attracted local, national and international attention.

The next Chief of Police to take the helm was George Reuscher, a seasoned veteran of the Akron Police Department from 1994 until 2003. The new \$4.5 million administration building was finished which gave the Police Department 9,000 square feet alleviating the cramped quarters that had officers often scrambling for a place to work. The first CAD

system in 1991 was pre-Windows; it was a disk operating system leased through CMI. While we look back and shake our heads in amazement as to how cumbersome the original system was, at the time, it was revolutionary to maintaining the calls for service. It would be another decade before the patrol cars would have mobile data terminals [MDT] and be able to rely and receive information over the network to and from dispatch. Officer training was a priority and many took the opportunity to learn advanced criminal investigation, traffic enforcement techniques, and a host of other topics that made this department stand out with an enhanced set of skills. By 1999, a K-9 was added to the department. Neiko was trained in narcotics detection and his handler, Detective Mike Gabel went through numerous and extensive K-9 trainings accordingly. The K-9 unit was discontinued after a few years following some unfortunate events involving dog bites.

2000's – ADVANCEMENT IN TECHNOLOGY

The end of the 20th century and into the 21st century brought about many advancements in the police department. Sundance [CAD] was a windows-based dispatch system that was leased beginning in July 2006 and continues to be used today. It has, of course, been updated many times with additional features that streamline the dispatch emergency services for the benefit of the officers and residents.

With the retirement of George Reuscher in 2003, Detective Lieutenant Richard W. Munsey accepted the position of Chief on an interim basis. He led by example from October 8, 2003 until December 31, 2004 when Michael McNeely was sworn in as the Chief. Chief McNeely led the department from 2004 until mid-2017 with his retirement taking effect September 30, 2017. Interim Chief was Vito F. Sinopoli who started his career as an officer in 1985, assumed the role of Township Administrator in 2013 and then took on the additional duties as Chief of Police in 2017 while continuing as Township Administrator. Surrounded with very capable staff, Chief Sinopoli leads the helm with professional dedication to service.

Body worn cameras [BWC] were implemented in 2015 and purchased from AXON with a 5-year contract. This is the same vendor that had supplied the TASER/CEW for a number of years before body cameras. The second vendor for body cameras was Pro-Vision in 2017 as technology was changing rapidly at the time and the first generation of BWCs were failing. The department was able to secure a grant from the Office of Criminal Justice Services in 2023 and new body cameras were purchased from Getac at no cost to the department. The life of a body worn camera is roughly 4 to 5 years at most. The latest technology allows officers and administrative staff to review, redact, and remotely email video to prosecutor's more quickly because of cloud storage.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE FUTURE

Without a doubt, the department is experiencing staff changes in the next few years. Many of the new faces in Dispatch and in the Police Department are young and fresh out of the academy. The seasoned staff are nearing retirement. Detective Lieutenant Richard W. Munsey retired at the end of 2022 with 51 years of service. Detective Lance is retiring in mid-2024 with 39 years of service. Twenty-five (plus) percent of the current officers have over 25 years of service. Recruitment is an on-going effort. The ability to keep up with the expense of the police department vehicles, equipment, training requirements is the cost of providing the best possible service to the residents and businesses of Bath Township. Grants from the State

of Ohio, local funding from the Bath Community Fund, private donors and various foundations are appreciated.

For more information, please refer to the Annual Reports of the Police Department that are published on the police webpage.



Bath Township Police Department Alarm Computer, 1976

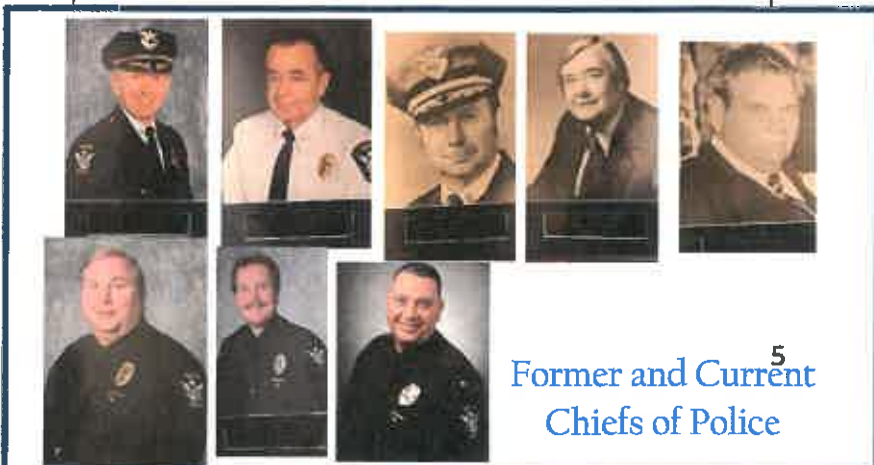


Bath Township Police Cadet

Dispatcher Glenn Goodrich of the Bath Police Department next to a new National Safety & Security Computer Alarm Panel, 1974



Jeffrey Dahmer's First Victim, June 1978: Steven Hicks



Former and Current ⁵ Chiefs of Police



trial to unfold Milo story this week



5 who pleaded guilty to testify for state

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