

Police Department History

The following includes an excerpt from **Generations of Pride, A Centennial History of Cudahy, WI (82-86)**

The community's first taste of law and order came when Barney Eaton, Village President, along with the Village Board, appointed George Long as Marshal and Alex Monroe as Constable. The Police Department as we know it today had its origin in 1906, the same year that Cudahy was incorporated as a city. Henry O. Krueger, Village Marshal from 1904 to 1906, was named the city's first police chief and John Luthke was named the first police officer. The department was increased to three in the spring of 1908 when Jacob Malicke was appointed to the night shift. Later that year a police cell was installed at a cost of \$1,517 in the police station located at the rear of City Hall. Paul Littman was selected as Police Chief in 1914 and served until 1918.

In 1916 the first police car, a Ford touring car, was purchased for police use. That same year, the department also purchased its first motorcycle, costing \$295, and Patrol Officer John Medrow was assigned to use the cycle for motorized patrol. In 1918 Medrow was appointed as Chief of Police and served in that position until 1951. Other significant events during that time included the adoption of a salary resolution by the Common Council, providing for one day off a month and a monthly salary of \$85.

In 1937 a police department alarm system was authorized by the Common Council and an eight-hour work day was instituted by the Fire and Police Commission. In 1948 an ambulance was purchased from Milwaukee County and served as the department ambulance until 1950, when a newer model was obtained. In 1953 an additional squad car was purchased, bringing the total fleet to three plus a detective car.

In 1950 a formal training program for department members was initiated. Equipment such as an Alco meter, fingerprint process, cameras and a traffictiming device were added for improved law enforcement services. Telephone call boxes, located in strategic locations within the city, were hooked up with the switchboard in the Police Department. The county also authorized the installation of teletype communications equipment to speed messages for police information.

In 1951 Anthony M. Wise was appointed as the Chief of Police. He was a 13-year veteran on the police force. Chief Wise appointed the department's first detective, Walter Sobicinski, and sent Sgt. Ted Kramer to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington D.C. for specialized training to benefit the Police Department. The department had 23 members in the early 1950's and grew to

36 members during Wise's tenure as head of the agency.

When Chief Wise was hired, he had specific orders to rid the city of houses of "ill repute," a task that he accomplished quite successfully. He also established the first responder ambulance service for citizens who became sick or injured. Chief Wise was a strong proponent of training, providing for numerous hours of instruction to better equip the officers for their daily encounters. He put additional call boxes at various locations throughout the city so that officers "on the beat" could maintain contact with the command officer at the police station. He purchased the first "parking jeep" for parking enforcement and traffic control.

In the 1980s Chief Wise created the Crime Prevention Unit to teach residents how to help themselves before becoming victims of crime. This public-education program consisted largely of home security surveys, that determined the best way to deter burglars was by equipping homes with locks and lights. Local businesses were also surveyed, and plans were devised to assist them with securing their properties against robbery, theft and burglaries.

Chief Anthony Wise retired in July 1988. Captain Charles Wolbert agreed to assume the role of interim chief until the position of chief could be filled. On January 16, 1989 Lt. Amie J. Cyr, a 24 year veteran of the Mequon Police Department, was chosen as the new Chief of Police. Captain Wolbert retired in February 1989 after 38 years of dedicated service.

Chief Cyr's goal was to reorganize the Police Department to perform in a more efficient and effective manner. One of his first changes was to remove the command officers from their desks and dispatch duties by hiring civilian employees to do the dispatching. Margaret Meyer, the first civilian dispatcher, was hired in 1989. In the early years, a typewriter was used to create the 'desk log' and radio channels were shared with neighboring agencies. When the dispatch center was created two years later, the dispatchers began handling Fire Department calls and adopted a new dedicated 911 system for emergency calls.

The construction and remodeling of the Police Department and City Hall were completed in 1991. Overall working space more than doubled for the Police Department, considerably improving working conditions. The dispatchers had their own center and the jails were entirely replaced with the latest models.

During Chief Cyr's tenure, a police roll-call procedure was initiated whereby all officers, prior to going out to their patrol areas, received information relevant to the preceding 12-24 hours of activity. The sessions also were used for valuable training and legal updates. In addition, the department implemented specialized training for all supervisors and detectives. They were required to attend an advanced police management school in order to enhance the knowledge and professionalism of the agency.

Chief Cyr retired in January 1995, and retired Brookfield Chief Jerome Wolf was appointed as interim chief in July 1996. He began his tenure by creating a Drug Enforcement Unit to address the ever-increasing drug problems in our society. Interim Chief Wolf integrated this unit with the School Resource Officer (SRO), who was assigned to the schools to educate and interact with the youth of our community. After more than eight years without a captain in the organizational structure, Lt. Richard Wargin was promoted to the rank of captain, assuming command of the entire operations for the department.

Chief Hayes (hired in 1996) was responsible for many technological improvements during his tenure as Cudahy Police Chief. One of the most significant was the Computer Voice Stress Analyzer (CVSA), a tool to help law enforcement determine if a suspect is telling the truth or not.

Chief Hayes also facilitated the extensive remodeling of the Communications Center in 2000, which houses the telephone and radio systems along with cutting-edge dispatch technology. A Computerized Aided Dispatch System (CAD), a digital recording system for all calls and radio communications, and a computerized 911 call-receiving mechanism were all added to the center, equipment that is essential to efficiently handle the more than 20,000 calls for police services each year. Mobile Data Computers were also installed in every patrol car, allowing the officers to access the Internet.

Chief Hayes retired in December 2002, and retired former Cudahy Interim Chief Jerome Wolf was called upon again to assist the Police Department during the selection process for a new chief. At the time, the City of Cudahy and the City of South Milwaukee were considering consolidation of police services which delayed the selection process for a new Chief. After it was finally decided that consolidation was not feasible, David Tellock was hired (as the new Chief) in December 2003. Chief Tellock served for one year before leaving for other employment. Lieutenant Dave Aamodt served as the Interim Police Chief following Chief Tellock's departure, until Richard Wargin's promotion to Chief.

Captain Richard Wargin was appointed Chief of Police on February 7, 2005. He had 37 years of law enforcement experience with the Cudahy Police Department, moving up through the ranks as a sergeant, lieutenant and captain. He was the first chief selected from the ranks of the Cudahy Police Department since the resignation of Chief Anthony Wise in 1988. Chief Wargin retired in June of 2007, and once again Lieutenant Dave Aamodt assumed the role of Interim Police Chief.

In December of 2007, Thomas Poellot was appointed the new Chief of Police. Chief Poellot had been a Captain within the Mayville Police Department prior to his appointment as Chief in Cudahy. Some accomplishments during Chief Poellot's tenure include the reintroduction of School Resource Officers (SRO's) in the Cudahy school system, the implementation of K-9 team (Officer Olson and Ezzo) for the first time in agency history, the training of two officers as Drug Recognition Experts (DRE's),

extensive grant acquisitions, a prescription drug collection program, and the use of asset forfeiture funds to help finance a Mobile Command Center (vehicle), Polaris Ranger UTV and tactical equipment for every officer. In 2013, a second K-9 team (Officer Summers and Case) was accomplished due in part to a private donation. 2013 also marked the start of a major agency undertaking – WILEAG accreditation, which includes updating all Department polices and systems.

Cudahy Police Chiefs, 1906 – Present

H.O. Krueger, 1906 – 1914

Paul Littman, 1914 – 1918

John Medrow, 1918 – 1951

Anthony Wise, 1951 – 1988

Charles Wolbert, Interim Chief,
July 1988 – January 1989

Amie Cyr, 1989-1995

Jerome Wolf, Interim Chief,
January 1995 – July 1996

Mark Hayes, 1996 - 2002

David Tellock, 2003 – 2005

Richard Wargin, 2005 – June 2006

Dave Aamodt, Interim Chief,
June 2006 – December 2007

Thomas Poellot, December 2007 – Present

Police work today is more different than ever before. Computers, laser speed devices, electronic stun guns, mobile data computers (MDC's) capable of inquiry and arrest warrants, GPS tracking devices, thermal-imaging cameras, remote cameras, lightweight body armor, cell phones, LED lightbars, multi-channel handheld radios. No doubt, today's police environment would shock police officers from the early days used to hitting the street with nothing more than a nightstick, revolver and a key to the call box.

The Cudahy Police Department has been successful in acquiring cutting edge technology to assist in providing the community with the best service possible. Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology is an example of the state of the art equipment, which provides our officers with an incredible tool to assist in their endeavors. We have four squads equipped with ALPR, which were purchased with grant funds. Documentation is also of the utmost importance to modern policing. Our Phoenix Record Management System (RMS) and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) has the ability to document effectively the nearly 20,000 calls for service (per year) that our officers experience. ALPR and the CAD systems are just two examples of modern day policing, and the illustrate the efforts which your police department utilize to provide the best service possible.