

# BELMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT

## STRATEGIC PLAN

### 2022-2027



*Knowledge ~ Courage ~ Integrity*

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## INTRODCUTION

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The Belmont Police Department 2022-2027 Strategic Plan will continue to be an evolving and living document which is constantly reviewed, updated and brought into line with the desires of the community. It is the culmination of a series of exercises all designed to ensure that the vision, mission, and objectives of the agency are successfully achieved. The plan ensures that the elements within this document are understood, supported and reflects the expectations of the community from its police department. An outgrowth of this process is the enhanced ability to effectively manage resources, provide accountability through measured results and efficiently adjust to change. Successful planning requires the fortitude to change course when opportunities and community demands arise. Ultimately, it is the planning process itself that keeps the agency focused on what the organization wishes to accomplish and the best route to ensure success.

### 1. POLICE CHIEF'S MESSAGE

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Police departments in the 21st century are motivated to more holistically engage the community in ways hardly considered in the past. American law enforcement, and indeed society in general, is being compelled to examine issues such as race relations, substance abuse, and mental health just to name a few recently “intensified” arenas.

When I was promoted to police chief in 2020, in addition to filling vacant command staff position, I along with department personnel, identified Five Core Priorities for the department to begin to immediately focusing on. Those priorities are Youth, Traffic, Elderly, People in Crisis and Domestic Violence. Officers were instructed to be creative, collaborate and take their time when working on these Core Priorities. Department Managers put an emphasis on these Priorities when scheduling training and approving overtime.

My First Year Plan stated the need for the department to embrace the key recommendations of President Obama’s Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing. I believe today, as I did then, that the Six Pillars identified by the Task Force **Building Trust and Legitimacy**, **Policy and Oversight**, **Technology and Social Media**, **Community Policing**, **Training and Education** and **Officer Wellness**, should be and are the foundation on which our organization firmly places itself. These six pillars surface again in the Objective portion of this plan.

*James MacIsaac*  
Police Chief

## **2. COMMUNITY AND ORGANAZTIONAL OVERVIEW**

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**The Community of Belmont** is a densely populated urban area, with 27,171 residents living within 4.7 square miles giving Belmont a population density of 6,038 people per square mile. Twenty four percent of the town’s residents are foreign-born according to the 2020 census. Demographics reveal that Belmont is roughly 76% white, 17% Asian, 1.5% Black, 4.3% Hispanic or Latino and two or more races 3.8% of the population<sup>1</sup>. Known as the ‘Town of Homes’, Belmont has very little commercial industry. Eighty percent of tax revenues is derived from residential real-estate tax. Residents pride themselves on their outstanding Public-School system. In addition to the public high school, there are three private high schools and two private middle schools in town. Belmont is also home to the world-renowned McLean Hospital.

Persistent public safety issues including increased traffic, property crime and quality of life issues will likely increase as Belmont and its neighboring community’s residential and commercial developments increase in size. Belmont borders the City of Cambridge on its eastside, Watertown/Waltham on the south, Arlington on the north, Lexington/Waltham on the west and lies only six miles from downtown Boston. Economic growth and residential expansion in all of these cities/towns has and will continue to add substantially to Belmont’s traffic concerns.

**The Belmont Police Department** operates on a \$7.3M (FY 2022) budget. In 2021, there were over 20,125 calls for service. The department runs its day-to-day 24/7 operations through its Patrol Operations Division. Patrol Operations overseas four platoons (day and night), and two specialized units – Traffic Enforcement and Community Services. The Administrative Division oversees the Detectives, Administrative Services and 911 Communications. All sworn officers are members of collective bargaining units with the exception of the Police Chief and Assistant Police Chief. The Police Chief is appointed by the Board of Selectmen and receives his/her authority to manage the department from M.G. L Ch. 376 Section 1, (Acts of 2010). Over the last 10 years, the department has averaged 47 budgeted sworn officers per year. In addition to sworn personnel, the Police Chief oversees an E911 communications division with 9 fulltime members and 4 per-diem dispatchers, special police officers and civilian employees bringing the total compliment to 101 persons. The Belmont Police Department is fortunate in that the members at the department provide a solid foundation for building on past success.

*The Administration Division* is responsible for supporting the daily operations of the department. This Division processes and coordinates all functions within the department and consists of a wide range of tasks necessary for the successful operation of the Department. The Administration Division investigates civilian complaints of officer misconduct and staff investigations. The Administration Division also functions as the Public Information Office and conducts various audits to ensure budgetary integrity.

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendations to the Select Board for Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Town of Belmont- Diversity Task Force Report.

*The Uniform Patrol Division* is the Department's primary and most visible staff resource. The Patrol Division is responsible for the suppression and prevention of crime, apprehension of criminal offenders, recovery of stolen property, maintaining the peace, enforcing traffic rules and Town by-laws. The Patrol Division is divided into Day Patrol, Night Patrol, and Traffic Enforcement. The Day and Night Patrols are assigned throughout the town to increase visibility, enforce the laws and foster positive relationships with our citizens. The Patrol Division responds to calls for service including, but not limited to, domestic violence, robbery, identity theft and mental illness evaluations.

*The Traffic Division* is responsible for overseeing and managing any traffic or parking matters that may arise and need to be resolved within the community. Officers assigned to this division are responsible for the investigation of car crashes especially those that involve serious bodily injury or death. The Parking Control Officers and School Crossing Guards fall under this division and are managed by the Officer in Charge of Traffic.

*The Records Division* is responsible for the management and maintenance of all traffic related reports, police incident reports, arrest information, parking tickets, parking permits, citations and any court related documents or records to be used by the public.

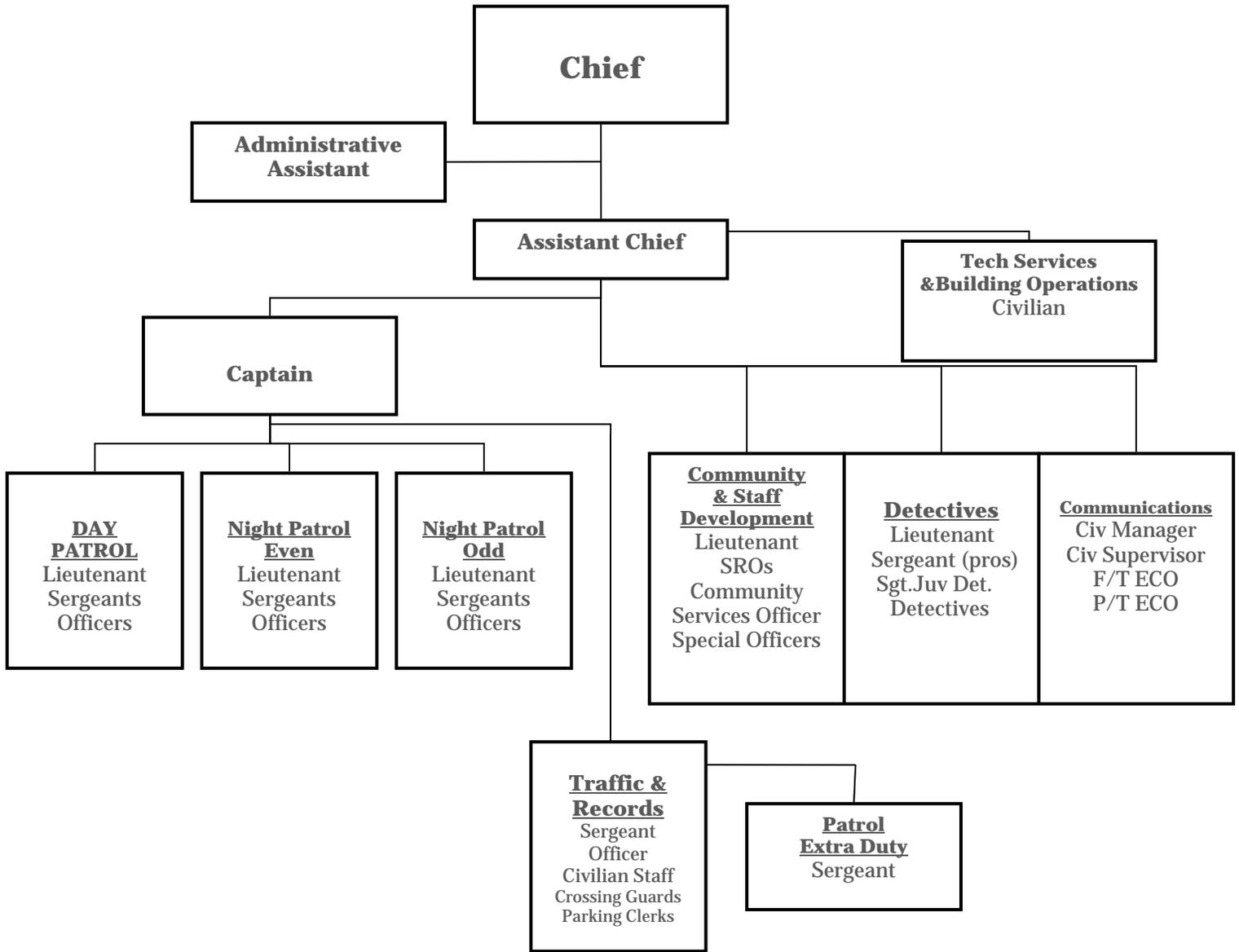
*The Detective Division* acts as the investigative arm of the Department. Detectives investigate all serious crimes committed in the town, including rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary and larceny. Two detectives at the rank of Patrol Officer are assigned to this division. Detectives are also responsible for the processing of crime scenes and the handling of evidence.

The Detective Lieutenant's duties, in addition to managing the division, include the issuing of gun permits and the vetting of town liquor licenses. One Detective Sergeant functions as the Department Prosecutor for all criminal cases at Juvenile, District and Superior Court and a second Detective Sergeant is assigned to manage our domestic violence, sexual assault and juvenile criminal cases.

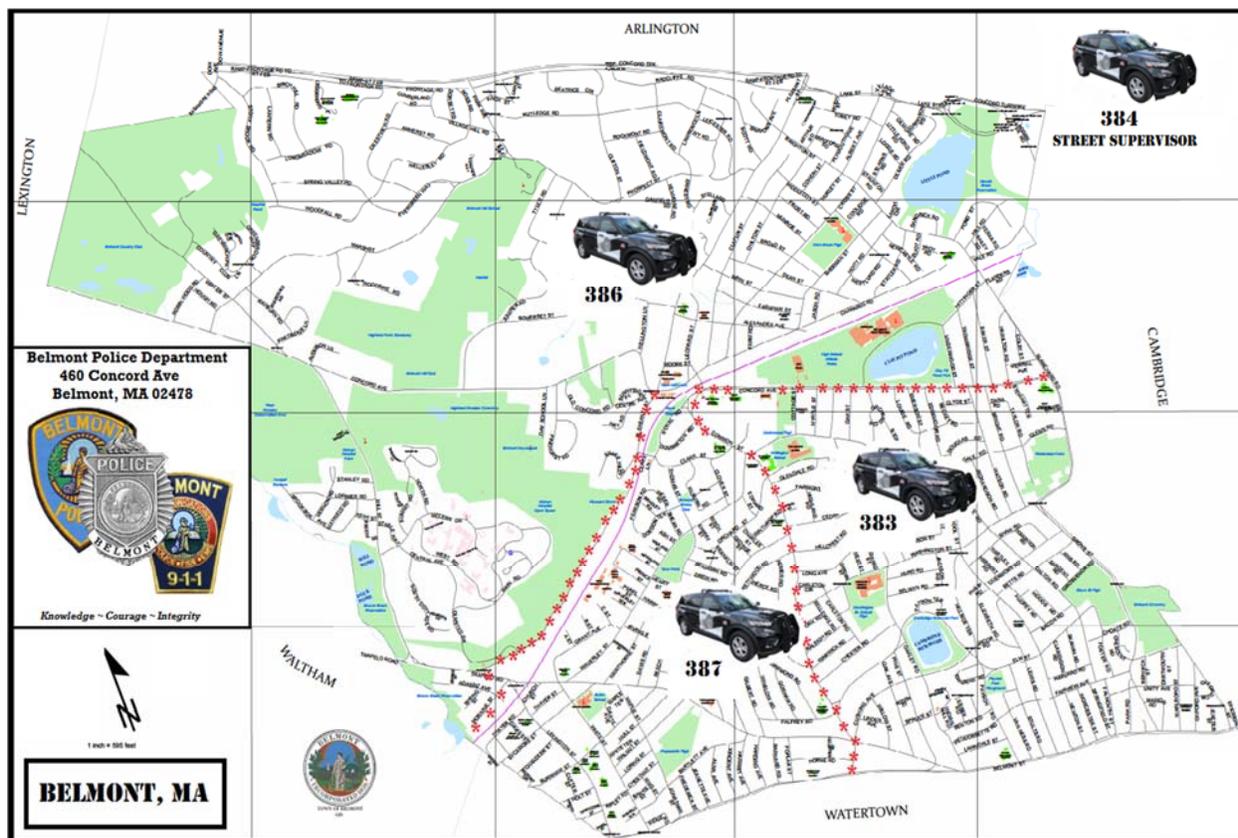
*The Community Services & Staff Development Division* solicits community participation by identifying problems and working towards solutions through partnership and community engagement. The Lieutenant in charge of this division is responsible for managing all department training including the processing of new student officers and oversees the School Resource Officers (SRO) and the Community Services Office that is assigned to Community Services.

*The Joint Public Safety Communications Division* is responsible for the handling of all the communication needs of both the Fire and Police Departments, emergency and non-emergency phone lines. This division is responsible for coordinating the response of the Emergency Medical System, through the use of telephones, cell phones, and radio and computer systems. Within this division, the alarm monitoring and billing systems are managed along with the town-wide notification system. This division also receives the telephone calls for all other departments within the town after normal business hours.

## BELMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



# PATROL SECTORS



*The town is divided into three sectors 383, 386 and 387. Geographical challenge: there are only three places in town where responding vehicles have access for crossing the rail road grade (Trapelo Rd, Concord Ave & Brighton Street).*

## CALLS FOR SERVICE BY SECTOR 2021

- (SECTOR 383) 1.04 Sq. Miles population 9,007  
Calls for service = 5,544**
- (SECTOR 386) 2.68 Sq. Miles Population 7,483  
Calls for service = 8,584**
- (SECTOR 387) .42 Sq. Miles Population 7,865  
Calls for service= 5,407**

*Sector Population based on 2010 census*

## **Joint Communications CFS 2021**

<b>Incoming Telephone calls:</b>	<b>54,281</b>
<b>Number of EMD Calls:</b>	<b>1,017</b>
<b>Number of EMD Evaluated:</b>	<b>918</b>
<b>Number of E 911 Calls:</b>	<b>2,624</b>

### **3. BELMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT**

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#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission of the Belmont Police Department, working in partnership with the community, is to maintain social order and improve the quality of life within the Town of Belmont. This is accomplished through constant vigilance and the pursuit of violators of the law as governed by both constitutional constraints and our ethical principles of justice, integrity, respect, courage and allegiance. Our goal is to understand and serve the needs of the Belmont community by providing the highest quality of police services, assisting in resolving problems, and promoting positive values through equitable and impartial policing consistent with and reflective of the shared values of the community.

#### **Our Vision**

To be the safest community in Massachusetts while building mutual trust and inclusiveness through collaboration and transparency.

### **4. CORE VALUES**

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#### **Values Statement**

The Belmont Police Department consists of dedicated professionals who are committed to a team environment and creatively solving problems. The work done by the members of the Belmont Police Department in support of our mission shall be guided by our Core Values through collaboration, preventive programs and the judicious enforcement of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the by-laws of the Town of Belmont.

#### **Members of the Belmont Police Department Value:**

***Communication and Cooperation:*** We will be accessible to community members and interact in an open and friendly manner. We believe all members of the community must work together and share information in support of our mission. We will seek to understand and work with all members of the community and other agencies in furtherance of our responsibilities.

*Community Service:* We believe our role is to serve the community in emergency and non-emergency situations. We will respond to deal with criminal matters. We will respond to work with law abiding citizens to address quality of life issues and other situations deemed in need of a police response by members of the community.

*Concern for Employees:* Our employees are our greatest asset. We will strive to assist our employees with their personal and professional development. The wellbeing of our employees is of utmost concern.

*Partnerships:* We will work with all members of the community, public agencies and private organizations in order to improve the quality of life and address crime and quality of life issues in Belmont. By combining the skills and abilities of all community members, we believe we can most effectively pursue our mission.

*Problem Solving:* We understand that crime and disorder are community problems. We will work with community members to identify and solve problems which impact the community. We will listen and seek to understand issues. We recognize the value of crime prevention measures. We will proactively seek to suppress crime and conditions that foster crime.

*Professionalism:* We will conduct ourselves in a professional manner consistent with our training at all times. We hold ourselves to the highest level of integrity and ethical standards. It is our responsibility to earn and build on the trust of the community. We will be honest and truthful at all times. We are committed to and will persistently strive for excellence.

*Respect for all Citizens:* We will treat all citizens as we would like to be treated. We maintain respect for individual civil and constitutional rights, human dignity, and cultural diversity and community values.

*Training:* We recognize that training is the foundation that supports the actions taken by employees in the community. We strive to recruit and develop exceptional employees. We seek to provide all employees with the necessary training to effectively serve the community. Procedures, equipment and tactics consistently evolve. We will continuously train employees to stay current with contemporary policing practices.

*Visibility:* We believe that officer visibility in the community reduces fear of crime. We will maintain a uniformed presence in the community. The presence of uniformed officers will help to deter crime. We will be accessible and approachable for members of the community.

*The Values Statement and the above Core Values informs the Community of the manner in which we conduct our business and deliver police services. It is the very core of who we are and serves as the organization's "moral compass". Even if we err, we will have the courage to acknowledge our mistake and act in a way that ensures it will not be repeated.*

## 5. THE PLANNING PROCESS

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The Belmont Police Department's Strategic Plan will serve as a guidebook for the coming years and will continue to evolve as a living document that is constantly reviewed, updated and brought in line with the desires of the community.

When the current administration took over in January 2020, the department was functioning well. Historically, the department has undergone changes, however, they have been mostly "one-off" decisions that are not part of a larger design. The need for such changes will always be present but it is also important to have an overall strategy and make such plans fit in with other long-range goals and the general direction the department is hoping to develop.

To that end, it was important that the department management team, along with some key team members, come together and host a series of conversations to discuss where the department is and where it should be headed. This involved a series of meetings in small and large groups and an evaluation by the patrol captain which assisted in producing the information contained in this report. The BPD team meetings included a SWOT analysis to specifically identify the department's **S**trengths, **W**eakness, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats. This work informed the objective-setting that followed.

While the police management team benefitted greatly from the input of everyone involved, the final decisions on the department directions must remain with the police chief. In this light, the information derived from the meetings is considered input, as opposed to direction.

### **Citizen Survey**

For the first time a confidential on-line Citizen Feedback Survey was distributed town wide and garnered 540 responses. The last time the Belmont Police Department conducted a Citizen Survey was in 1997. The Survey was distributed on November 3, 2021 and was closed on December 3, 2021. The Survey consisted of 28 questions and was created with the help of International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP).

#### **Survey Distribution:**

The Survey was emailed directly to:

- Belmont Town Meeting Members
- Belmont Town Employees
- Posted on BPD Social Media Accounts (Facebook & Twitter)
- Community Stakeholders (community groups and businesses)

*Recipients were requested to forward the survey*

## SWOT Analysis

Defining the **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats** from an internal perspective focuses upon the most defining element of an organization, the employees. The process is an attempt to gather insight from staff regarding their recommendations, suggestions for improvement and their assessment of organizational management.

In addition to utilizing the internal perspectives on our organization, we have incorporated external perceptions and data compiled from the Citizen Survey as well into our SWOT analysis.

## **6. INTERNAL/EXTERNAL SWOT RESULTS**

### **STRENGTHS**

Selected Calls for Service:

*Domestic Violence*

*Mental Health/People in Crisis*

*De-escalation.*

*Missing Persons*

Public Image

Renovated Police Headquarters

School Resource Officer Program

Professional Staff

E911 Communications Center

Restorative Justice Approach

Good employees who care

Membership Northeast Law Enforcement Council

### **WEAKNESSES**

Information Technology

Public Outreach

Lack of Supervision (on certain shifts)

Lack of School Crossing Guards

Staffing Shortages

Traffic Management

Officer Wellness

Shooting Range in disrepair

Lack of Tactical Training

Time required to fill vacancies

Lack of diversity amongst the police officer ranks

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Additional Training

Increase citizen engagement

Expanded Officer Wellness –Stress Management

Collaborate with in town youth organizations

Develop internal leadership focused on future department leaders

## **THREATS**

Town Budget/lack of funding for additional officers

New Technology

Decreases in police personnel

Employee work load

Growth in housing in town

Low morale due to low pay- lack of contract agreements (perpetual negotiations)

Perceived lack of external department support

National police incidents eroding local trust of the police.

Increased population in town and neighboring communities will equal more calls for service, additional traffic

Inability to fill vacancies and attract police officer candidates

Need to upgrade Tasers in 2024

Inability to diversify our ranks through the current hiring process

## **7. OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES**

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Setting objectives for the agency converts the mission and values of the organization into targets and performance milestones. They represent a commitment to producing specific results in a five year time frame.

### **BUILDING TRUST AND LEGITIMACY**

***Objective: Increase diversity of department personnel – Fill staff vacancies by recruiting police officer candidates that are able to sympathize and understand the points of views and experiences of all our residents.***

The Belmont Police Department is committed to identifying and employing the best-qualified candidates available, not merely eliminating the least qualified. Hiring Managers know that the benefits of effective recruitment and selection policies are manifested in a lower rate of personnel turnover, fewer disciplinary problems, higher morale, better community relations and more efficient and effective service delivery to the community.

The Belmont Police Department is currently a member of the Massachusetts Civil Service system which manages hiring and promotions within the department. Civil service provides three avenues for departments wishing to diversify their ranks, none of which can be applied in Belmont:

- a. Recruit among minorities in your community by encouraging people to take the exam.
- b. Rule Number 8 –Selective Language-Communities need to prove to Civil Service that a determined percentage of the calls you respond to the people seeking your services speak another language.
- c. Part 10- The Town admits to a past practice of discrimination in its hiring process (which we have not done).

Over the last ten years, there has been a severe lack of candidates from Belmont taking the civil Service police officer entrance exam which has resulted in a low number of candidates. The Town of Belmont adopted the civil service upper age limit of 31 years old or younger as of the original exam date. This upper age limit has caused us to eliminate two qualified candidates in the last 8 years. The hiring restrictions applied by civil service has not only hindered our attempts at diversifying our ranks but filling vacancies has become an impediment that cannot be overstated. This deficiency has had a negative impact on department operations for over two years.

In 2021, following a failed budget override, one police officer position was eliminated from the department. This reduction brought the number of budgeted sworn officers to 48. The 2020 census indicates that the Town of Belmont's population is just over 27,000. Belmont has added an addition 3,000 plus residents in just over ten years. In order to meet the goals and objectives of the department, we feel that the number of sworn officers should be set at 50.

***Strategy:***

Adopt the recommendations from the Town of Belmont’s Diversity Task Force- Re-examining impact of civil service requirements for the Police Department positions on both diversity and vacant positions. If civil Service remains in place, support Bill no. 1474, An Act Relative to the civil service Resident Preference<sup>ii</sup>, which would consider an applicant to be a town resident if they graduated from Belmont High School.

***Action Items:***

- Successfully negotiate the exit from civil service with both police unions
- Attend college and university job fairs
- Promote the position of Police Officer throughout the community
- Career informational sessions at Belmont High School
- Advertise for lateral transfers on department website
- Maintain records and data that supports the requested number of sworn officers

**TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

***Objective: Enhance the technological capacity of the department.***

The Department’s use of technology should support and enhance our functions, expand our ability to make intelligence-based decisions, and provide solutions to complex problems—not create complexity and inefficiencies. The BPD has not yet gathered the expertise to understand how to leverage existing internal or external resources for data collection, analysis, and sharing throughout the organization.

***Strategy:***

This objective should address common challenges, such as replacing legacy technology, converting record management data, integrating systems, modifying policies and procedures, training employees and as well as providing training that will move the agency forward. Our challenge is not to have implementation delays which could result in new technologies becoming obsolete or outdated prior to complete implementation.

***Action Items:***

- Hire a fulltime software specialist
- Maximize the use of our QED Record Management Software
- Create supportive systems for body-worn camera options/dash board cameras
- Evaluate existing mobile data terminals
- Post daily crime statistics/police calls for service on department website
- Evaluate and inventory all department hardware and software
- Provide officers with access to technology that will help them accomplish goals

## **COMMUNITY POLICING AND CRIME REDUCTION**

### ***Objective: Increase Public Outreach and Engagement***

The Belmont Police Department needs to do a better job informing the residents of Belmont on our work. We need to provide opportunities for resident to engage officers outside of and away from the police cruiser.

### ***Strategy:***

The Belmont Police Department will commit to be more pro-active in engaging with the various stakeholders of the agency to include; the community, other law enforcement agencies and local government and school organizations. The department will strive to allocate specific resources to improve upon existing and new pro-active community outreach initiatives. Through various communication mediums such as social media, department website, personal community contact, inter-agency networking and host training initiatives, the BPD will strive to be an organizational leader in order to engage our community and law enforcement partners for the purposes of continuing to make Belmont a safe and friendly place to work and live.

### ***Action Items:***

- Encourage officers to volunteer in the Community
- Form a “Police Chiefs Citizens Advisory Council” improving communication and transparency
- Develop a one-day citizen class focused on Police Use-of-Force
- Develop and publish online crime maps
- Improve web content on department website
- Increase activity on Social Media accounts
- Enhance public service messages focusing on personal safety and crime prevention information
- Citizen Police Academy
- Encourage Coffee with a cop programs

### ***Objective: Traffic Calming and Traffic Enforcement***

Improve safety for pedestrians, cyclist and motorists. There is probably no other task that officers perform that receives more scrutiny than traffic stops. We need to work hard to ensure that transportation (pedestrian/bike/ motor vehicle) is safely managed within the Town of Belmont.

### ***Strategy:***

Strengthen the BPD infrastructure to better support and enforce traffic control in the Belmont Community. The police department is committed to improve the quality of life for the citizens of the community. The police department will continue to collaborate with the Office of Community Development, the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Department of Public Works to make assessments ensuring traffic safety concerns are addressed. The agency will work to acquire additional personnel and traffic safety equipment and strategically deploy resources based on DATA to minimize adverse impact on our community.

### **Action Items:**

#### **Collaboration & Data:**

- Collect and analyze traffic accident statistics to improve traffic safety
- Improve the public's ability to report traffic concerns
- Assess and procure equipment to improve traffic control (LIDAR-speed feedback signs).
- Work with TAC to find ways to reduce traffic volume
- Traffic Safety through Enforcement (based on DATA), Engineering and Education i.e., DDACTS- Data-Drive Approaches to Crime & Traffic Safety

#### **Enforcement:**

- Increase traffic officers (motorcycles used exclusively for traffic functions)
- Participate in regional and statewide DUI enforcement campaigns
- Implement focused enforcement program based on traffic collision trends
- Implement "Focus on Bike Safety" annual enhanced enforcement period with educational component.

#### **Engineering:**

- Conduct comprehensive speed survey
- Collaborate with Public Works to address roadway engineering issues through the Belmont Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and on an as-needed basis for problem solving meetings.
- Improve visibility of crosswalks in collaboration with Belmont Public Works Department

#### **Education:**

- Utilize local media to relay local and national trends and tips in traffic safety
- Produce public service messages addressing traffic safety issues including areas of high collision occurrences
- Send additional officers to Advanced Crash Investigation School
- Develop traffic safety class for public education
- Develop educational media to elevate awareness of bicycle safety
- Re-introduce the annual Bike Rodeo to introduce bicycle safety to the youth of Belmont

## **OFFICER SAFETY AND WELLNESS**

### **Objective: Improve Officer Wellness**

Officers & Communication Officers report a number of factors that are increasing stress levels both at work and at home. The department must address not only the external stressors that accompany a position in public safety but the internal stresses the organization may create and work to alleviate those stressors.

### **Strategy:**

Shift commanders and supervisors need to take the initiative and hold informal debriefings following stressful incidents. Department managers need to be aware that as human beings different events affect people in different ways. Regularly provide educational information to employees on the benefits of sleep, eating well and exercising.

***Action Items:***

- Maintain and strengthen our participation in the Greater Boston Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM).
- Strengthen and enhance the Employee Recognition Program
- Implement Mindfulness Training
- Enhance employee physical health
- Allow employees to have input into equipment purchases and cruiser set ups
- Make available regularly scheduled wellness checks
- Explore changes to work schedules to help alleviate stress

**POLICY AND OVERSITE**

***Objective: Achieve Department Certification and then Accreditation***

The department has been working towards this objective of over 25 years. Persistent staff shortages and failures in technology have proven significant stumbling blocks toward reaching this goal. This self-initiated process requires the department to meet 155 policy standards for Certification and 375 standards for Accreditation.

***Strategy:***

When department staff increases, assign a supervisor fulltime to work towards accreditation.

***Action Items:***

- Continue to release new policies and procedures that meet State Certification/Accreditation standards
- Proceed through the phases of self-assessment through to the Commission review
- Department personnel will be required to attend Mass Accreditation conferences and training sessions

***Objective: Improvements to the Department Shooting Range***

The shooting range located in the basement of police headquarters was not included in the recent renovations. Having an on-site shooting range will benefit the department immensely.

***Strategy:***

Incrementally improve the Range conditions utilizing funds from our Budgeted Capital Expenditures.

***Action Items:***

- Replace sound proofing
- Paint
- Provide a heat source for winter months

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<sup>i</sup> Expanded Information

### **Strengths**

1. **Selected Calls for Service:**  
Domestic Violence, Mental Health/People in Crisis, De-escalation, Missing Persons  
Officers feel as though they are properly trained and perform well on these calls in both response to them and in follow-up.
2. **School Resource Officer Program**  
The Belmont SROs handled a significant amount of calls for service both during the school week and on weekends. The BPD enjoys an excellent working relationship with the Belmont School Community. Increases in class sizes have resulted in an increase in youth activity at school and outside of school.
3. **Public Image**  
Officers are approachable, Citizens have expressed confidence in the BPD, The department has worked hard at building trust within the Belmont Community, the chief is visible participant in community meetings, and the department is transparent.
4. **E911 Communication Center**  
Police officers at the BPD emphasized the safety and efficiency provided by having E911 inside the Police Department Headquarters. Citizen Survey question 15 asked the taker how effective do you believe the following programs are on addressing crime and quality of life issues. Of the 15 programs Belmont E911 achieved the highest number of votes for Very Effective.
5. **Renovated Police Headquarters**  
The renovations at the BPD have vastly improved working condition and officer safety as well as the safety of persons in department custody ( new cell block)
6. **Membership in the Northeast Law Enforcement Council**  
NEMLEC memberships provides officers with additional no cost training and experience. The department is able to call on additional resources with no cost the Town of Belmont.
7. **Department Personnel**  
Employees believe one of our greatest strengths is the people that work together at the BPD and the relationships that have been established. Good people who genuinely care about the citizens they are interacting with.

### **Weaknesses**

1. **Information Technology**  
Break downs (Mobile data terminals in cruisers -email), Lack of consistent use of Social Media accounts, Out of date software & computer, Underutilization of current software (scheduling, RMS). One Tech Services person is performing the work of three. We do not, at this time, possess the confidence that would could successfully manage and maintain a body-worn camera program.
2. **Traffic Enforcement**  
Complaints regarding motor vehicle traffic by far outpaced all others throughout the Citizen Survey. In 1997, the department partnered with Brandies University to conduct a Citizen Survey. Survey results from 1997, revealed that Traffic was the number one problem. Conversely, a large number of residents complained of overzealous traffic enforcement. BPD officers, relying on experience, will tell you that Belmont residents want us to enforce traffic violations on those passing through our community but can at times believe they are not part of the problem. Citizens in the most recent survey have expressed concern that traffic stops may be used to racially profile. Racial profiling is a concern of not only the residents in Massachusetts but throughout our country. The Belmont Police Department remains transparent in providing traffic stop data to groups or individuals who request motor vehicle stop data based on race and gender.  
  
The department lacks a sufficient number of officers for directed traffic enforcement. The department and the officers would like to have an additional two officers assigned to the Traffic Division. Unfortunately, our current staffing numbers do not allow for the assignments.
3. **Public Outreach**  
The BPD needs to improve on informing the public of the services we provide and the workings of the internal programs. While the Police Chief is visible in the community, the public would like to meet more officers. Failure to engage all youth not just athletes. The local newspaper has discontinued their printing and reporting of the weekly police logs. Many who completed the Citizen Survey believed that decision was made by the Police Department. The Department is exploring ways to fill this void.
4. **Officer Wellness**  
Officers do not feel comfortable using services provided by the Town. There are many stressors that are affecting police officers and dispatchers. Everything from shift work, incidents on the street and internal stressors created by the department.
5. **Department Supervision**  
Street Supervision lacking on some shifts, Lack of tactical training for officer safety, No end user input- into cruiser equipment placement.
6. **Lack of School Crossing Guard**

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- Officers have to cover crossing posts during peak motor vehicle traffic times.
  7. Lack of diversity amongst the police officer ranks.
  8. Department Shooting Range in disrepair- lack of tactical & firearms training

### **Opportunities**

1. Training:  
Additional Police Officer Standards and Training (POST), Police Reform will help build community trust and ensure accountability, Patrol Techniques-Response, Legal Updates, State Certification & Accreditation

### **Threats**

1. Town Budgets/cuts and lack of funding for additional officers
2. New technology – body-worn cameras
3. Employee work load due to lack of officers and decreases in personnel
4. Housing growth in town and our neighboring communities will increase traffic and calls for service
5. Low moral due to low pay and lack of contract agreements. The three year contract presently being negotiated expires this June (2022) and negotiations will begin again.
6. Personnel perceive a lack of external support from town government
7. Inability to fill vacancies. Stagnation does not allow for officers to bid off shifts that are not suited for their personal lives
8. Inability to diversify our ranks through Civil Service
9. A significant financial commitment will be needed to upgrade our Tasers in 2024

ii Section 58 of Chapter 31 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting at the end of the third paragraph, the following new sentence:

“By a vote of the legislative body, a city or town shall consider an applicant as having resided in that city or town for one year immediately prior to the date of the examination, if the applicant so chooses if they have obtained a high school diploma from a school in that city or town or resided in that city or town when they received their high school diploma.” This bill originated from within the Belmont Police Department several years ago with the intent to diversify and attract additional police officer candidates.