

Belmont Massachusetts Police Chief First Year Plan

by Christopher J. Donahue

I have developed this draft first year plan for which I will solicit input from the community, police officers, Town Administrator Patrice Garvin, Chief McLaughlin, Select Board and other Town Officials. With this collaborative effort, the first year's plan can be developed with clear, measurable goals and objectives.

My plan will have the entire department empowered with the community to attain these goals and objectives. This plan will focus on 16 areas: Accreditation for the Department, Community Policing by Precinct, Courts, Crime reduction Methods, Domestic Violence, Elderly, Juveniles, Mental Health and Opioid Use, Officer Wellness/Leader mentoring, Racial Perception, Businesses, Safety committee, School Safety, Technology, Traffic, and Training. Each Officer will be assigned to several of the focus areas. The plan will function based on community needs. Recommendations from **21st Century Policing** will be included in our goals and objectives as best practices to promote effective crime reduction methods, building public trust and safeguard officer wellbeing¹.

My Belmont Police Mission Statement will be: **To offer police services that will improve the quality of life for the entire community.** This will be done by commissioning both the police and the community to work together and allow for effective communication to solve problems. The Belmont Police Department will strive for excellence, have the highest degree of integrity and earn the respect of the community. The Police department will be accountable for their actions and be empowered to do the right thing based on our Mission, Policies and Procedures.

Although the Belmont Police are heading in the right direction and have accomplished several positive things, I believe we can make great advances and should expect more from our officers and the department. To accomplish this, I will perform a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat ("SWOT") analysis in each division. This SWOT analysis will help to determine which programs and practices to retain, enhance or eliminate. One example: To analyze the **traffic** department, particularly considering feedback from the community, reports that traffic enforcement needs improvement. This area should be one of the initial priorities of the Police department. We currently have one officer assigned to traffic. I would add five more officers to the traffic division and have them count towards the patrol divisions minimum manning to limit overtime. The **patrol** division would continue to respond to calls with help from traffic units when needed. In addition, every officer on the street will be empowered to think of ways to improve safety for pedestrians, motorists and cyclists. The three E's of Education, Enforcement and Engineering will be our focus for improvement. The enforcement piece is the biggest area for improvement, and it is imperative we change our philosophy on enforcement to make it safer in Belmont to get around. (see graph in summary on last page) The **Detective Unit** will continue with investigations, but will now do officer follow up calls and run the Internal Affairs Unit. **The Dare, K9 Officer, Juvenile Officers** in both Middle and High school have been a great asset for

¹ Ref. [President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing](#)" (PDF). *Office of Community Oriented Policing Services*. United States Department of Justice. Retrieved 25 September 2016

both the Police and Schools. The **Community Service Office** has continued to make the elderly and mental health patients a priority for the department. The **Prosecuting** office also is vital to the department. I would maintain these departments in a level service budget. If cuts are made, my priorities would be for the traffic and patrol to remain fully funded. The other divisions are vital to the Mission Statement as well, and hopefully cuts are not necessary. Officers and supervisors will be delegated assignments and have responsibilities to address the 16 areas of focus outlined above.

Week 1

Before the first day starts, it is important to meet with Town Administrator Garvin, Human Resource Director Jessica Porter and the Select Board. I would thank them for the opportunity to lead as the Chief of the Belmont Police. I would explain my Mission, Goals and Objectives to make sure they are consistent with the Town's objectives. In addition, I would remind everyone that this will be a community effort, and their communications will be vital to establish a clear shared vision for the Belmont Police.

On the first day as Chief, it is important to have a great first impression while meeting as many people within the organization. By discussing clear, concise messages of expectations, it would carry on throughout the years to come. In my career, I have always been able to be credible and respectful. These two words, (credible and respectful) will carry on as Chief. Also, organizations need to meet as an entire group periodically. I would schedule a department meeting and explain to everyone what is expected of them. I would discuss my mission statement and ask for volunteers initially in the 16 different focus areas. I would assign the remaining tasks and explain to everyone that you can achieve the goals and objectives. It is my job as Chief and the rest of the department to give the officers the tools to complete the assignments successfully.

I would talk to Donna Costello, the Chief Administrator Assistant, to get updated with current day to day operations. This includes meeting with Human Resource Director Jess Porter to discuss any current personnel issues. During this time, I would discuss the need to look at our recruiting and hiring practices. I will tell them we need a plan that will thoughtfully develop a robust, diverse recruitment process. I would make sure to address timely issues that need attention. I will review the active building project and budget in detail to ensure there are no open issues or decisions pending for the police station renovation. This would include payroll, billing, and approvals.

It is also important to be aware and have the department ready for possible critical events, crimes, and disorders that could affect the Belmont Community. Every day as the Chief, it is my job to make sure the community is informed and knows the Police will be ready to handle these events and perform the follow up necessary to make everyone safe.

I would show up for the roll calls and address the shifts. I would sit down with the 911 operators and talk to them about expectations and what they need, to do their job. (At some point I would be talking to Fire Chief Frizzell and discuss his opinion on the status of the 911 system and his thoughts on merging with other towns)

Week 2

I would continue to explain my excitement and honor about being the new chief of the Belmont Police Department to the officers. I would also explain how my transformational leadership style needs their input to be successful. In addition, although we met as a group, I will be meeting with each officer individually to get to know them, receive their input and ask what I can do for them to succeed. During the meeting, I will stress how important it is to be held accountable for everyone's actions. Recently, I read a book by David Goggins called **Can't Hurt Me: Master your Mind and Defy the Odds**. In the book he wrote about the "Accountability Mirror". Each week, he would have 3 goals put on his mirror with post it notes. He would look in the mirror and know he must accomplish them. In the same book he wrote about how the average person only gives 40% effort in their lifetime. There is always more effort to give. It is my job to get the officers, supervisors and command staff to have a higher effort level each week. They do a great job reacting to calls but have never been directed or asked to do more.

Week 3

During this week, my meetings will be with various department heads in the town and school administrators to reinforce the great relationship we currently have together. Also, during this week, I would reach out to the President of The Northeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council ("NEMLEC") and attend the first meeting and introduce myself to the area Chiefs. Also, I would meet with builders/contractors again and talk to the building committee. It is important to make sure we are heading in right direction. In addition, I will inform them that I will create a small group of officers within the department to provide input. The officers will work alongside me and the Assistant Chief in this process. In addition, I would follow up with Town Administrator Garvin and let her know how the first two weeks went and discuss any issues that have come up.

I would talk to HR Director Porter and TA Garvin to start the process to fill the Captain's position. This job is necessary and would need to be filled quickly due to the workload being absorbed by other members of the police department or not getting done. After this promotion, there will be openings in other areas. There are current active Sergeant and Lieutenant Lists available to choose from. With these two retirements, there will be a need to hire 2 more officers to maintain our current budgeted amount. I am hesitant to hire any more officers until I talk to the Town Administrator and understand what is projected for the fiscal year. In addition, due to the changing demographics of the community, it might be an option to look at different specialty lists within Civil Service. I have always been involved in Union activities and have a great relationship with the President of both Unions. This trusted relationship is important when talking about trying to implement any major changes within the department. After talking to Unions, Town Administrator Garvin and the Select Board, the Belmont Police and the Town might consider leaving Civil Service and allow us to create our own examination. This allows us to have more flexibility and the ability to pick from a larger, diverse group.

Week 4

I would continue to work with Donna Costello on current day to day operations and start the budget process for FY 2021. Although I have done this previously, it is important to sit down with Town Administrator Garvin and the Assistant Chief to go over the budget and know her

expectations on presentation with the Public Safety sub-committee. I would investigate every account and discuss with the police personnel in charge of it and make sure the numbers are justified. I would suggest a zero-based budget approach as an option. This is a bottom up approach and justifies what they do and not just add percentages every year to their budget. This is important because the new fiscal year preparation will be starting up and the Town is going to be facing tough decisions. The ability to get caught up on the budget, the software involved, and meetings will make the transition smoother. The police building project renovation, capital improvement budget, operating expense budgets, and current work orders that are coming in, need to be reviewed and approved as well. It is critical to understand the current business situation quickly. Also, preparing and attending budget and staff meetings are very important.

I would also start to analyze the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of each division in the Police Department.

Week 5

During this week, I would start to reach out to community members and get to know as many members as possible. This includes the elderly, schools, business leaders, youth groups, minority outreach groups, and religious leaders. I would have our department use several methods of social media to collect data and get help from groups in town that have had success reaching to most of the community. This is the time I would create a survey for community members and ask what the priorities of the town should be. This will help with the direction of the police. Also, the department will focus a lot of time on face to face communication. This allows for direct feedback and understanding the needs of the community by being approachable.

Week 6- 10

During these weeks, I will continue with day to day business and police operations.

I will continue to analyze each department and understand the SWOT in detail. These meetings with police department heads will be clear and concise. The Police Department Heads of Patrol, Detectives, Community Service, Prosecuting, and Traffic will be asked the following: To write down what they do great, what they need work on, what opportunities are out there for improvement and what is holding them back. I would expect them to come up with a plan on each of these areas and hold them accountable to work on them. This will be new to most of the Department Heads. I will be explaining the importance of knowing what is going on and justify what we do as a Police Department. The Belmont Police do a great job of reacting to calls and incidents but there needs more proactive Department philosophies.

This example of the Patrol Division SWOT:

Strength: energetic force, great personnel and handling of calls and critical incidents

Weaknesses: needs more proactive approach, better delegation and follow up, better use of Evidence Based Police Practices. There is no real Criminal Analysis going on. Currently I am the only member in the department familiar with our crime mapping system. (see crime map on last page) We need more officers trained in these evidence based practices.

Opportunities: develop relationships with residents, schools, businesses, and minority community, get accredited and better training with departments for critical events.

Threats: the current mistrust of the minority community nationally and locally to police, engagement to residents that don't normally need the police, keeping up with technology and

training. Other issues of domestic terrorism and school shootings are a concern. Increase in Mental Health calls and Opioid addictions.

Weeks 10-26

After getting more input from the Community, Officers, and Department Heads, we will start assigning the goals and objectives for the 16 Focus Areas. (See below chart) I am passionate about these initial areas and know that the officers in the Belmont Police will appreciate being empowered and will have success with the goals and objectives. The concept will be explained clearly, and officers will be held accountable. Community engagement will be a priority and active problem solving will be developed. There will be supervisors assigned to each of these areas and they will be expected to provide monthly progress reports.

Weeks 26-52

During these weeks, I will continue with day to day business and police operations. I will continue to review the 16 areas and ensure that goals are being met and changes made.

Throughout the year, I will be working with members of the department on updating our policies, getting information out to community on what we are doing and following up when needed. An officer will be recognized immediately when their performance is excellent, as well as officers who go above and beyond on any incidents. The Captain will monitor every report. If officers need to be recognized, there will be an officer of the month and awards ceremony at the end of the year. This type of recognition immediately and formally at end of year, will go a long way for morale and job performance.

It is important to reach out to the District Attorney's Office, Attorney General's Office, Director of Public Safety and fellow Police Chiefs locally and around the country. This is imperative to get training and have a "best practices" approach. For example, I would reach out directly to the offices of District Attorney Ryan and Attorney General Healey to provide updates and officer training. In addition, I will seek someone such as Chief Kyes from Chelsea Police, who is on the Massachusetts Accreditation Commission, assist the Belmont Police to become accredited. During this time, I would continue to build bonds with departments around town. I will get to know better the town meeting members, warrant committee members, and the entire community. The goals and objectives will be continuously monitored, and corrective action will take place if necessary. The Mission Statement will be paramount throughout my tenure of the Belmont Police. During this time period, I will meet with the Unions and HR to create a performance evaluation for officers and supervisors that reflect several metrics to determine effectiveness. This system will focus on a weighted average approach on several goals and objectives set from their Focus Areas assigned and their regular position. All officers will have the same criteria but the areas they volunteered for will be weighed more. This will be a unique approach due to the difficulty of quantifying how effective officers are and police department is.

Summary

Follow Mission Statement and perform SWOT analysis on each division.

Use 16 Focus Areas with the help of community to engage in active problem solving.

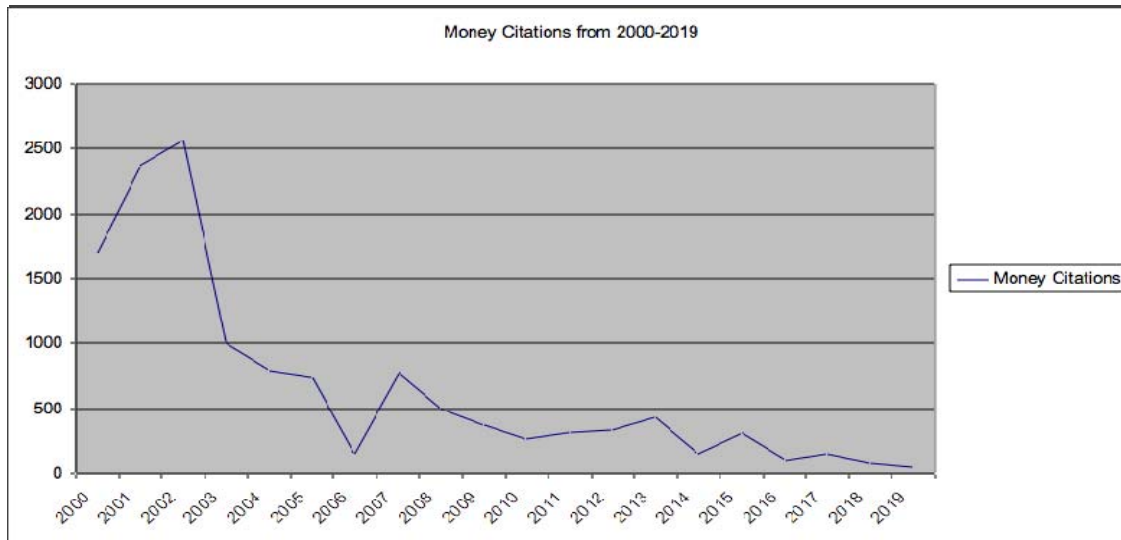


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Focus on reduction of crime: Use my Crime Analysis abilities and data Collection techniques to assist in presentations and directed patrol. Use Evidence Based Policing, Predictive Policing, Data Driven Applied to Crime, Traffic and Safety, Intelligence led Policing, and Problem-Solving Policing, and New Investigative Techniques.

Work together with the Select Board, Town Administrator and other Town Departments and Committees to build the trust of the community and keep it safe.

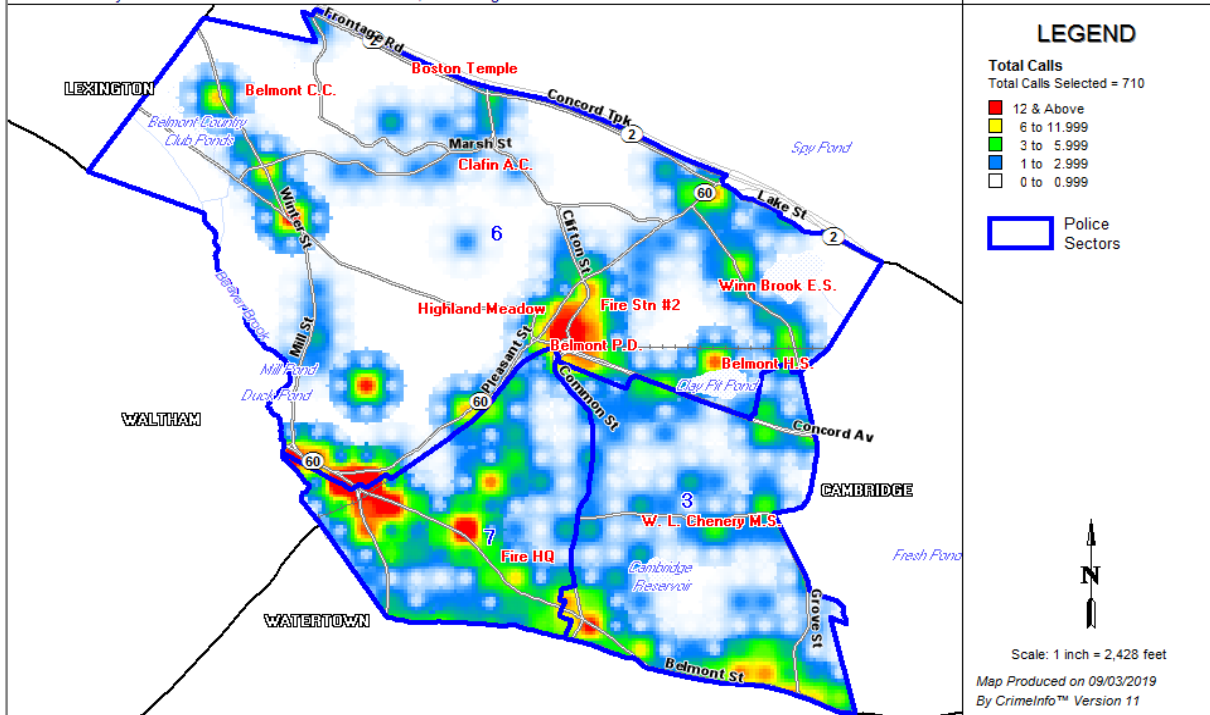
Make traffic enforcement a priority in Belmont. (see recent trend below)



BELMONT CALLS FOR SERVICE - 2018

Accident

For: All Days of the Week with No Time Restrictions, Excluding Filtered Address: P.D.



The above are accidents for the 2018 year, broken out by area and concentration. This type of data collection and crime analysis allows us to concentrate our enforcement areas. The analysis can be broken down by all police incidents and calls for service.