

BELMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Chief Candidate First -Year Strategic Plan December 2019-December 2020



Respectfully Submitted By,
Assistant Police Chief James MacIsaac

Knowledge ~ Courage ~ Integrity

PART 1- INTRODUCTION

This one- year transition plan is my vision containing goals and objectives to help guide me and the staff during the transition of leadership at the Belmont Police Department (hereinafter referred to as department).

The department has run efficiently and effectively over the last 12 years, however, attempting to maintain the status quo at the department is not an option. The unwillingness to maintain the status quo is not a reflection of ineffective or poor prior leadership at the department. It is rather a philosophy of mine that rests on the premise of whether or not you are an individual, a team or an organization; whenever you try to maintain you stunt growth, cease to be effective and never develop or encourage new ideas, new methods and new ways of thinking. This philosophy, coupled with strong democratic management and leadership style, will allow the department to continually assess the public's ever-changing expectations for safety and security that rise and fall with real and perceived risk factors, as well as the fiscal constraints that challenge police agencies to deliver the desired return on investment for scarce tax dollars.

PART 2 COMMUNITY & DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

2-1 Community - Belmont, MA

The Town of Belmont is a densely populated urban area, with 26,171 residents living within 4.7 square miles giving Belmont a population density of 5,316 people per square mile. Twenty percent of the town's residents are foreign-born according to the 2010 census. Demographics reveal that Belmont is roughly 75% white, 15% Asian with Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino and other Races making up roughly 9% of the population¹. 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 that 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 east side, 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.

2-2 Organization- Belmont Police Department

The Belmont Police Department operates on a \$7.5M (FY 2020) budget. In 2018, there were over 20,500 calls for service. The department runs its day-to-day 24/7 operations through its Patrol Operations Division. Patrol Operations oversees 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 10 fulltime members and 4-diem dispatchers, special police officers, auxiliary police officers and civilian employees bringing the total compliment to 108 persons. The Belmont Police Department is fortunate in that the membership at the

¹ According to the websites: www.city-data.com/city/Belmont-Massachusetts.., neighborhoodscout.com/ma/belmont/demographics, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belmont, Massachusetts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belmont,_Massachusetts)

department provides a solid foundation for building success. The department personnel under Chief McLaughlin's leadership have demonstrated that they are invested in working in partnership with the community to solve problems and improve public safety. Leaders are obligated to bring out the best in people. As Chief, I also have an obligation to do all I can do to create an environment where others can succeed. With a clearly stated set of objectives and goals, the department will ensure professional growth amongst its ranks and will continue to provide high quality police services to the residents of Belmont. In delivering police services to residents, there are many areas where the department excels. Areas where we excel and will be built upon are: community outreach & engagement, services to schools/youth, elder services, officer wellness and professional standards. These areas will serve as the cornerstones of our foundation.

PART 3-IMMEDIATE CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES OF 2019-WIN (what's important now)

3-1 Command Staff Vacancies and Promotions

In 2019, we see the retirement of the department's patrol captain and police chief. The incoming police chief will have to oversee the promotional process to fill the positions of assistant police chief, captain and then complete backfill promotions most likely down to the sergeant position. This is not so much of a challenge for the new police chief but rather an opportunity to develop a command staff that is invigorated and eager to take on new challenges and ideas.

PART 4- COMMUNICATING & COMMAND STAFF DIRECTIVES

Beginning in December 2019, this first-year planning process will be initiated at the command staff level. The purpose of this process is to set first year objectives, goals and for me to explain expectations that I have of the command staff.






4-1 Meet with Town Administrator and the Select Board (week one)

Develop a list of items she and they would like to see addressed; build an understanding of what they see as priorities and expectations.

4-2 Meet with Town IT Director & Town Administrator to discuss department IT/software.

4-3 Facilitate meetings with key community members & town employees (Be an excellent listener)

4-4 Communicate with Command Staff-Command Staff meeting (week one)

-  Present & **SHARE THIS PLAN**
-  Discuss expectations & holding supervisors accountable
-  Define my leadership style
-  The importance of delegation and follow up
-  Listen to recommendations and concerns

4-5 Initiate the practice of weekly staff meetings

Each Monday morning a staff meeting with administrative staff will be held at 10AM.

4-6 Initiate quarterly staff meetings with Command Staff at the rank of Lieutenant & higher.

Every six months hold command staff meetings with all supervisors/sergeants present.

4-7 Perform a complete budget analysis by division and initiate monthly budget review meetings with involved staff. Begin to set operational budget forecasts for FY21 and evaluate capital budget needs.

4-8 Institute interdepartmental purchasing request process to reduce waste in purchases (will result in savings)

4-9 Create quarterly work reports to be distributed to town administrator and select board on department activity.

PART 5- COMMUNICATING & ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION FROM ALL EMPLOYEES

In addition to the 48 sworn officers, the department has a number of civilian employees that play critical roles within the department. Our internal culture must encourage the notion that while we are all individuals, we share the same values, trust one another, do the best we can and show people we genuinely care about them. All employees, regardless of rank or position, must know that their input and participation in the day to day operations at the department is welcomed and valued. We all share the same overarching goals and objectives

regardless of our position within the department. Supervisory staff at all levels will be instructed to set clear goals and to use the objectives spelled out below when dealing with subordinates:

- 🛡 Give employees the autonomy to solve problems and improve conditions
- 🛡 Provide the resources needed for success
- 🛡 Give constructive feedback
- 🛡 Accept ideas, input and when possible include subordinates in decision making
- 🛡 Encourage employees to speak up if they believe something is being done incorrectly
- 🛡 Welcome adversity as a learning experience
- 🛡 Recognize employees for work well done

5-1 All hands-on deck meeting

Hold a meeting with ALL department personnel to inform them of our goals and objectives moving forward. **SHARE THIS PLAN.** Outline expectations and standards and explain the direction in which we want to move the department. Inform all officers/employees that we will be creating and reinforcing a culture where officers & civilian employees have the freedom to be creative in their approaches to problem solving and to help them feel invested and engaged in their work.

5-2 Initiate monthly informal meetings with the unions

Once a month meet with union representatives to seek input and disseminate information. Deliver on any “easy” changes that may be proposed. Meet one-on-one with all employees & have an open-door policy.

PART 6- RECRUITMENT OF POLICE OFFICERS

In order to remain effective and to help solidify confidence within the community, it is a crucial that law enforcement agencies must recruit, hire and retain individuals with the goal of creating diversity in the work place i.e., gender, race & ethnic diversity. Under the current civil service system, the department has little to no leverage in diversifying staff through recruitment or the hiring process.

6-1 If the department remains in civil service

In order to encourage diversity in future hiring, begin to aggressively lobby for the passage of Bill No. 1474 filed by Senator William Brownsberger and Representative David Rogers. The idea for this Bill originated with department Captain Peter Hoerr.²

6-2 If Town Meeting votes to remove the department from civil service

Creating diversity in the department will prove less challenging. The department will need to work closely with the town’s HR department to develop strategies for recruiting individuals that will increase diversity within the department.

PART 7- CONDUCT SWOT ANALYSIS

The strength of the officer is in the department & the strength of the department is in the officer.

The department needs to conduct a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis. SWOT analysis is the process by which the command staff identifies the department’s internal and external factor that will affect the department’s performance. Internal factors encompass the department’s strength and weaknesses while external factors identify opportunities and threats. The outcome of the SWOT analysis will help us to organize and streamline our department and is a critical component in the development of a five-year strategic plan³. The SWOT results will help determine which programs we need to expand and which programs we need to eliminate. I have identified 19 programs or functions within our department that I believe need to receive a thorough analysis. The nineteen items are preliminary and additions to this list will most likely be added once the SWOT analysis is under way. It would be careless and reckless if one person i.e., the Police Chief, determined on their own which programs should be retained, expanded or eliminated.

² This bill would allow any graduated of BHS to receive preference under civil service regardless of place of residence

³ See Part 9

When making decisions of such magnitude, the Police Chief needs to consult with involved staff, relevant town employees, and involved stakeholders along with completing a thorough examination (SWOT) in order to ensure that the decision and its results will prove effective and beneficial to the department. Completing reports and communicating significant changes effectively can save money and eliminate unnecessary time wasted in arbitration or at JLMC hearings.

Program –Areas of Evaluation	Preliminary Considerations & Questions
Communications -911	Explore regional options vs present program & hosting a regional ctr.
Domestic Violence/Sexual Assaults	Are we focusing enough resources in the areas of follow- up and prevention? How well have our SROs & Juvenile Detective been addressing these issues with Belmont youth?
Engaging Belmont’s Youth	Are we doing enough, can we expand?
Traffic Enforcement	How successfully are we responding to traffic issues? Is the community satisfied with our activity? Is DDACTS (Data Driven Approach to Crime & Traffic Safety) working?
Working with Seniors	Focus on officer training, response & follow up. Can we improve efficiency with external partners?
Mental health/response to individuals in crisis	Focus on training, identifying, de-escalation, and adding additional less than lethal force options.
Working with diverse populations both inside the department and outside.	Training –have all our officers been provided with strategies for dealing with diverse populations? Are officers fully aware of the history in the US involving police encounters with minority individuals and with the theory of implicit bias? How accepting is the department to fellow employees?
Audit/RMS & existing software/hardware & the adding of a software specialist.	Has QED (record management software) become obsolete? Explore Nexgen and other RMS software to improve reporting, data collection, benchmarks and ensure that data is accurate. Do we have proper server technology & service contracts? How do we fund for the position of software specialist?
Response to incidents	Is our overall response and follow up to all incidents satisfactory? Is quality control and follow up being completed?
K9 Program	Risk, rewards, overall cost and value. Is the K9 program worth continuing?
Use of Force	Do our officers have the tools and training needed to keep the public and themselves safe? Have they had sufficient training in de-escalation?
Public Perception	How do people view the department and its members? Conduct Citizen Survey
Add GPS to cruisers	Will GPS improve dispatch efficiency & response time, increase officer safety and increase security of equipment?
Police Sector Geography	Does the present three sector configuration serve the town and department effectively?
Department police officer staffing levels	Do we have sufficient staff to meet present & future goals and objectives? Can we reduce staffing on the overnight shift?
Supervisory staffing levels by position in relation to function and span of control.	Do we have too many supervisory positions? What is the proper span of control for positions outside of patrol? Should some specialty positions be set aside for officers of rank? How important is promotional opportunities to overall moral and retention? Does the command staff need to be restructured? How will union contracts effect our decisions?
Crossing Guard Problem	Is it possible to limit the number of crossing guards? How do we attract and retain new crossing guards?
Auxiliary & Special Police Officers	Are these two areas being underutilized? Can we, should we, combine the two groups? Will restructuring allow for the potential to augment staff on a regular basis?

PART 8- POLICE CHIEF SETS THE COURSE





8-1 Present and discuss a new Mission Statement

Current Mission Statement

The Members of the Belmont Police Department are committed to working in partnership with all citizens of our community in the delivery of police services, raising the quality of life for all. We promote dignity, respect and a safe atmosphere by recognizing our responsibility to maintain order, fairly enforce laws and to protect individual rights.







The Mission Statement above is adequate but I believe it is time to expand on this statement that is well over ten years old. A Mission Statement should be developed with the input of stakeholders⁴ so that there is total commitment to the Statement.

Mission Statement should include but not need to be limited to the following:

-  Define Public Safety
-  How do we achieve acceptable levels of public safety?
-  Define principles that will guide our organization
-  Who do we serve?

The suggested Mission Statement below is a good example for discussions around a new Mission Statement. The proposed mission statement not only informs the public of what we are trying to achieve but it makes our employees aware of our mission regarding integrity, ethics and protecting constitutional rights by incorporating our Core Values into our Mission Statement.

The Belmont Police Department is a community service law enforcement organization striving to maintain the safety of its citizens. At the same time, the department focuses on quality of life issues and the resolution of conflict within our community. The department's core values are:

-  *Maintaining high standards of integrity and ethics.*
-  *Protecting constitutional rights.*
-  *Problem solving and order maintenance.*
-  *Collaborating and partnering with citizens*
-  *Reducing crime and fear of crime.*
-  *Protecting vulnerable populations.*

8-2 Create an Employee Code of Ethics

In combination with the mission statement every police organization should have an Employee Code of Ethics. The Employee Code of Ethics can be developed through our Police Manual.

8-3 Department Training Programs need to establish goals, objectives and a focus for annual training including budgetary goals and projections.

8-4 Move to accelerate the accreditation process with Lexipol. Assign a fulltime position as manager? ⁵

8-5 Create a shift/focus in our present value system at the department. Create an ethos from the top down that focuses resources and thinking towards areas that are of primary concern to residents. Our internal culture and training should embrace a guardian rather than a warrior mindset to help build trust and legitimacy within the community. Declare to all staff that, commencing immediately, the areas outlined below page 7 will be a primary focus for us: ⁶

⁴ Stakeholders include employees, residents, community leaders etc.

⁵ The department entered into a three-year contract with Lexipol to assist in the development of polices & procedures

⁶ These six areas of focus originate from what I have observed over my career as areas of importance to Belmont residents. It is possible that our focus will expand after SWOT & the creation of a five-year plan with stakeholders.

Traffic: Since 2003, the department has not emphasized traffic enforcement as one of the primary responses to managing traffic in town. Data reveals that traffic related incidents and calls account for 42% off all our calls for service. Adding an emphasis on traffic enforcement will require a change in culture among all officers in the department and will take time to adopt. The Police Chief must clearly state goals & objectives and inform subordinates that traffic enforcement is a priority for **EVERY** officer. Immediate changes that do not infringe on past practice, CBAs or the law: Officers volunteering to ride police motorcycles will be required to submit a determined number of citations per shift⁷. All supervisors will be responsible for developing a DDACTS assignment each week and to follow up with reporting. Increased police enforcement is one part of the solution, however, the present traffic problems in Belmont pose an adaptive challenge to law enforcement and cannot be solved with a commonplace technical approach. Solving or managing an adaptive challenge requires partnerships, experiments and adjustments from within the community. The department needs to take the lead in creating and fostering partnerships with town committees and residents.

Elderly: The department, through the Community Services Division, does an outstanding job when dealing with issues involving seniors. Through officer training we have performed well when it comes to identifying seniors who are in need of assistance. We have officers who specialize in contractor scams and frauds where seniors are often the target. In order to maintain the elderly as a primary focus for department resources, leadership needs to continue to train officers and provide the resources necessary to protect one of the most vulnerable groups of people in our community. The department needs to build on its relationships within Belmont, including the Council on Aging and Housing to ensure that we are working effectively and efficiently.

Youth: Much like the seniors, the youth in Belmont are also vulnerable to an assortment of occurrences that can have a negative impact on their wellbeing and future. The department has done outstanding work through its SROs in maintaining an exceptional relationship with the Belmont Public Schools. As Assistant Chief, I instructed both SROs that I want to be personally informed of any incident that involves possible criminal behavior with a student. Police heavy handiness could have dire consequences when dealing with youth and as a department we want to make sure that our response to juvenile criminal activity is measured and well thought out. I have worked closely with students, school personnel and the superintendent on many incidents that have occurred in the schools and I believe our two departments enjoy a working relationship that exceeds simple cooperation. There is still much work to be done as the findings of the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Assessment (YRBS) indicates the students are still taking risks. 55.6% of BHS students reported that they drank alcohol along with other serious risk-taking behavior.

People in Crisis: Police departments all over are experiencing increased calls for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. We need to ensure that our officers continue to receive training in de-escalation and that our officers are trained in the use and deployment of less than lethal use-of-force options. Officers need to have access to shared information that can help identify people in the community who may need services. We need to continue to train officers to be more proficient in recognizing when people are in crisis and we need to provide our officers with additional less than lethal use-of force options.

Domestic Violence: When we look at data that involves crimes of violence in Belmont, the overwhelmingly vast majority of those crimes are associated with domestic violence. The elderly, youth and people in crisis mentioned in the sections above are all vulnerable to domestic violence. Unfortunately, we cannot predict where and when new incidents of domestic violence will arise. We can, however, ensure that victims of domestic violence and domestic abusers are steered toward services to help them put an end to the cycle of

⁷ Officers cannot be ordered to issue citations. It is my personal opinion, that our motorcycle unit has not been properly deployed. If the department wants to retain the motorcycles, the officers will have to utilize them for traffic enforcement.

violence. The BPD needs to ensure that our partnerships with the courts and the Middlesex District Attorney remains strong. We need to ensure that support remains for our Domestic Violence Detective who helps to ensure that family and victim needs are met and that 'High Risk' offenders receive the proper attention from the courts. Our SRO's will continue to work with the schools in supporting students who were the victims of or witnesses to domestic violence incidents.

Restorative Justice: Continue our partnership with the C4RJ program and look to expand the C4RJ ethos into the department's operational mind set. The department can spread the Restorative Justice values into everyday operations by acting as mediators involving neighbor disputes and quality of life issues by promoting engagement and participation in citizens solving problems.

PART 9- JUNE 2020 BEGIN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

The new Police Chief and the department, working in a partnership with the citizens of Belmont, will need to develop a Five-Year Strategic Plan. Strategic planning is essential for long-term success. This plan should be researched and developed using departmental personnel at all levels and call on community groups and individuals necessary to accomplish this vital task. This plan shall not be developed in a vacuum. Every department employee and community stakeholder needs to know where the police chief wants to take the department and needs to be empowered to participate in this process. The police chief will set the course. The speed and efficiency in which we move along that course towards our goals and objectives will be determined by department managers and staff.

This Plan should also embrace the key recommendations of the President's Final Report-Task Force on 21st Century Policing May 2015, including: building trust and legitimacy, policy and oversight, technology and social media, community policing and crime prevention, training and education, procedural justice, and officer safety and wellness.

This Five-year Strategic Plan will act as a compass providing us with a direction of where we want to take the department. The success at which we move in the chosen direction will be determined by leadership and management.

9-1 Strategic Plan- Phased Outline

Phase One: Conduct a Citizen Survey

Phase Two: Incorporate the findings and results of the SWOT & Internal surveys

Phase Three: Community-Stakeholders Planning Session with the Chief acting as emcee, officers will conduct presentations regarding their duties, problems they have faced and how problems have been solved.

Phase Four: Create the Strategic Plan

9-2 Distribute the Five-Year Plan

Post on department website and distribute to all personnel.

PART 10- AS POLICE CHIEF: CONTINUE AND KEEP ON SERVING THE COMMUNITY

As Police Chief, I will be strongly invested in service to the community and constantly seek new ways to positively interact with it. Keeping a finger on the community's pulse is critical. The importance of seeking out and identifying new challenges facing Belmont and the ability to develop fresh and innovative solutions cannot be overstated. Increasing visibility through interaction with service clubs, youth programs, crime prevention efforts, and school programs conveys the important message that the chief cares about the community and is committed to improving quality of life.