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## Four officers promoted in Belmont as police chief cuts back hours

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Alan L. MacRae

**Newly promoted members of the Belmont Police Department are Capt. Rich Mann, Master Sergeant Steve Akerstrom, Detective Sergeant Raechel Moulton and Sergeant Evan Boulanger at promotion ceremonies on Friday. (Alan MacRae/for The Laconia Daily Sun)**

By MIKE MORTENSEN, LACONIA DAILY SUN

BELMONT — Four Belmont police officers were promoted Friday in a ceremony conducted before dozens of town officials and townspeople.



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Belmont Town Clerk Cynthia Deroy administered the oaths of office to Richard Mann who was promoted to captain, Stephen Akerstrom who was raised to rank of master sergeant, Evan Boulanger was promoted to sergeant, and Raechel Moulton who becomes the department's first-ever detective sergeant. The four together have 74 years experience with the department.

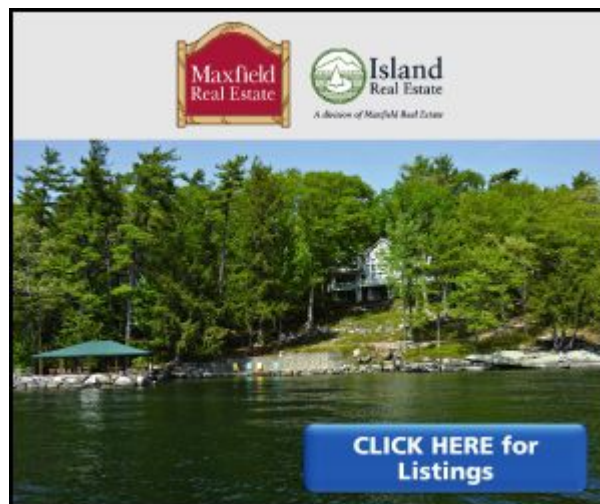
The promotions coincide with Chief Mark Lewandowski cutting back his work schedule to 32 hours a week.

Mann, who is second in command of the department, now takes on the additional administrative duties and responsibilities as well as continuing to be the department's media liaison representative.

He joined the Belmont force after serving as an Air Force police officer, and a brief time studying to be a draftsman. Law enforcement service runs in Mann's family. His father is a retired Massachusetts State Police officer and a son is about to start his training to become an Air Force Police officer. Mann started his time on the Belmont force as a patrolman. Over the years he has served in other roles, including being the department's prosecutor.

Akerstrom, who joined the department after a stint with the Gilmanton Police Department, will be the operations commander and will directly supervise the patrol division which includes bicycle patrol. A Belmont native, Akerstrom said that knowing so many people in the town is a big part of what makes being a Belmont police officer rewarding, and at times challenging.

Moulton is the department's first full-time detective, Lewandowski told the gathering. Before certain officers would periodically switch from performing patrol duties to doing detective work, which meant cases were often handled by several officers before they were resolved. The chief praised Moulton for her ability and knowledge in the detective role.



Boulanger who among other duties is the department's K9 officer "is taking on a huge responsibility" Lewandowski said of Boulanger's promotion from corporal to sergeant.

The chief said the department is fortunate to have people with the dedication and longevity of Mann, Akerstrom, Moulton and Boulanger. He said one reason the 21-person department has a the caliber of people it has is because everyone on the force has a role in process of hiring new recruits.

"It's important that they get along," Lewandowski said of trying to get the right chemistry between the new hires and those with time in the department.

He said his department "is too small to be big and too big to be small." Last year the department handled 10,500 calls for service, he said.

The ability of the department to foster close connections with townspeople was evidence by the number of residents who crowded into the Corner Meeting House.

Jean "Sue" Schmidt who attended the ceremony and reception with her husband at the Corner Meeting House, said she appreciates how officers regularly come to coffee hours at the Great Brook Village 55-and-over community where they live and update them on what the department is doing as well as to warn them of criminal activity. She noted that one time an officer warned the group of a particular phone scam that was preying on local older citizens.



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“About a week later we actually got one of those calls and so we knew right away it was a scam,” she said.

Although Lewandowski will be cutting back his hours, he said neither he nor he nor the officers will notice much of a difference. “It amounts to an hour and a half a day,” he said of his hours been cut to 32 a week. He’s not looking to retire anytime soon. “I’ve been doing this for so long and that I can’t imagine doing anything else,” he said.

**Captain Rich Mann of the Belmont Police Department is pinned by his wife, Julie, as sons Riley and Kyle look on. (Alan MacRae/for The Laconia Daily Sun)**

**Belmont Police Detective Sergeant Raechel Moulton is pinned by her husband, Concord Police Sergeant Barrett Moulton.(Alan MacRae/for The Laconia Daily Sun)**