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Belmont police revert to 'traditional' cruisers

BELMONT - The town police department is changing its colors.

Former Police Chief Vincent Baiochetti, who retired at the end of 2012, convinced the selectmen 10 years ago to change the color of town police cruisers from traditional black and white to "gunmetal" gray, said Lt. Rich Mann.

But last fall, as new Chief Mark Lewandoski was preparing to take over, the department decided to go back to black-and-white cruisers, which are more easily identifiable to town residents, he said.

The department's new cruisers this year are four black-and-white Ford "police interceptor" vehicles. When department officials go back to the town to replace the departments remaining three gray cruisers next fall, they will ask for black-and-white cruisers again.

"People know who we are better in a black-and-white," Mann said.

"Before, they saw the gray vehicles and said, 'Oh, a Belmont cop,' whereas with the new cars, they realize the police are protecting their neighborhood."

Black and white cruisers are nationally the standard for law enforcement, he said, because of their public recognition value.

Belmont cruisers will now also resemble police vehicles in surrounding cities and towns, he said.

"So far, the public has been very supportive; people like the change," Mann said.

The new black-and-white cruisers will also save the town money because they have a higher



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Belmont's old cruisers, like the one on the right, are gunmetal gray, but all-new cruisers will be like the new black-and-white cruiser on the left. (DAN SEUFERT PHOTO)

resale value, he said. That's because the white decals on the door panels can be pulled off, leaving a plain black car.

The department also wants to change its pants color from gray to more traditional blue, but Lewandowski said that will only happen if residents donate money to pay for the change as part of the department's new "Ditch the Gray" campaign.

"The dark navy blue is more traditional," Mann said.

Those wishing to help pay for the new uniform pants can mail donations to the Town of Belmont, Ditch the Gray Campaign, P.O. Box 310, Belmont 03220.

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