

**From:** [hutch](#)  
**To:** [City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** : Quality of Belmont Police Department  
**Date:** Friday, July 10, 2020 3:30:50 PM

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Dear Friends at Belmont City Council,

07-09-2020

Re: Upcoming gathering/meeting (7-15-2020) regarding quality of Belmont Police Department and their total lack of "racism".

I have said it before, I'll say it again: We have nothing to complain about the Belmont Police Department.

These folks provide quality, thoughtful care to our homes, our lives, our traffic, our safety.

Nightly around 3:00AM there is always at least one policeman at the intersection of Bayshore Freeway and Ralston, watching the traffic, making sure folks are following the rules, making sure there are no drug addicts roving the freeway, making sure there are no wild fires... They also take care of accidents on the San Mateo Bridge to make sure traffic flows smoothly. I know....I watch them.

Our Belmont police regularly patrol the hills to ensure grasses are clipped back during wild fire season, checking out various homes of folks on vacation to make sure there are no break ins. They come usually within 15 minutes if we suspect kids are rollicking on Biker's Knoll with gas-powered vehicles in the middle of the night. They have helped kids on a jeep joyride up the back of my property (open space), three sheets to the wind, scared to death because they did not know how to bring the jeep back down the hill and go home. When someone wanted to be a fire bug and light a fire down the hill, yup, the police came, blocked off Hastings car traffic and helped provide a way for firemen to put out the 40-foot blaze right in back of my house.

Of course, we can get into more personal problems. I had someone try to steal my identity and ultimately my Silverado truck. Again two to three policemen came to the house, provided advice regarding FTC, closing various credit card accounts immediately, how to secure my property. Ultimately they were able to find my truck near Las Vegas, arrest the man who took it, and returned the truck first to Belmont Police Station and finally to me.

One time my Mom had some plumbing work done. The guy doing the work told my Ma he would fix her fence as well if she would advance him \$250. Then he made the scene and disappeared. I called the Belmont Police. They came to the house and told us to call the "plumber" on a phone whose answerer claimed he was not there. The policeman took the receiver and began talking....within 5 minutes the plumber had gotten on the line and was offering to come to the house and return the \$250!!!! We got the money back.

I have lived in Belmont for 45 years and I never saw Belmont Police mistreat ANY person, whether minority descent or not.....except, of course, when they gave my Ma a speeding ticket for going 35 on Ralston.

We need our police here and they should be paid accordingly and given the respect they deserve, NOT DEFUNDED. I think we need to concentrate our thoughts/deeds on the important things that affect OUR city proper, NOT what any other city is doing in the neighborhood. Kudos to the Belmont Police Department.

Sandra Hutchinson

**From:** [Marvin Sanders](#)  
**To:** [City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** Belmont PD Community Task Force  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 14, 2020 8:49:19 PM

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Hello,

I'm a 20-year resident of Belmont, and have been grateful on many occasions for Belmont PD's responsiveness and professionalism. However, in the current environment we have a shared responsibility to explore new ideas and make sure the police force and community work hand in hand -- continuing the tradition of a safe, just, and friendly city of which we'll all be proud.

For this reason, I'd like to voice my strong support for the creation of a community task force, comprised of Belmont residents, to ensure that community voices work directly with the Public Safety and Health in Policing Subcommittee on Belmont PD procedures, funding, and practices.

Thank you,  
Marvin Sanders

**From:** [Warren C. Gibson](#)  
**To:** [City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** Belmont police  
**Date:** Monday, July 6, 2020 7:05:53 PM

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In my 40+ years' residence in Belmont, my infrequent interactions with the police have all been positive. For heaven's sake do NOT reduce police funding unless you find waste.

Two possible issues that are nationwide:

- Qualified liability, which makes it excessively difficult to obtain redress for police violations of individual rights. Our council should be aware of reform efforts at the national level. See
  - <https://lawcat.berkeley.edu/record/1128553?ln=en>
  - <https://www.cato.org/blog/why-qualified-immunity>
- Excessively powerful police unions

Warren Gibson

**From:** [Tomvic1998](#)  
**To:** [City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** Belmont police  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 15, 2020 5:49:15 PM

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While I am a white male and have no knowledge of how minorities may have been treated, I always have been impressed with the members of the Belmont police department on the rare occasion that I have needed to interact with them. I do not support reducing funding for the police department. I think quality police officers are the result of good training and good pay and that requires adequate funding, not reduced funding.

Thomas R. Williams Belmont

**From:** [Coralin Feierbach](#)  
**To:** [City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** Belmont Public Safety Listening Forum  
**Date:** Thursday, July 9, 2020 7:14:06 PM

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Hello Belmont City Council,

Here are my suggestions:

1. At the least, you may want to consider changing the name of the Belmont Police Department to Belmont Public Safety Department (that would remove any of the negative connotations of the word “police”)

Besides Public Safety sounds much nicer than Police

2. The City of Sunnyvale CA has a Public Safety Dept. which consists of

1) Police

2) Fire

3) EMT

All three areas wrapped under one roof. And they all are crossed trained.

Here is the info on that idea.

The City of Sunnyvale CA has a unique Public Safety department instead of separate fire and police departments. I have strongly believed that cities should look very seriously what Sunnyvale has done. What do you think? Should police be more like fire personnel?

Read all about it:

<https://sunnyvale.ca.gov/services/departments/dps.htm>

Good luck,

Coralin Feierbach

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**From:** [rkpang](#)  
**To:** [City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** Listening forum regarding BPD  
**Date:** Monday, July 13, 2020 3:13:11 PM

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Hello City Councilmembers:

My name is Robin Pang-Maganaris. I am a long time resident of Belmont as well as past principal of Nesbit School. I would like to share with you, both as a parent as well as principal, that I have had only the best, most supportive and professional experiences with BPD's School Resource Officers.

During my 9 years as principal at Nesbit, I had well over a hundred interactions with the various officers assuming the role of SRO. Each time, I found their support to be valuable, critical and relevant. Officers conducted themselves in highly professional manners with an eye on serving as opposed to punishing. Never in my 9 years as Nesbit's principal did I find an SRO coming from a place of intimidation or bullying. My ability to do my job was enhanced because of the SROs who I could always count on as a resource, a listening ear and a ally.

As a parent, I also experienced the same supportive presence of the SROs when my daughter was a teenager. My daughter was in need of extra guidance during her high school years and I will be forever grateful to Officer Vogel and Officer Jordan for the support they provided her.

During these times where police brutality is routinely demonstrated via social media, I am here to say that my extensive experience with BPD's SROs couldn't be further from that truth.

Should you have any further questions, I welcome the dialogue.

Sincerely,

Robin Pang-Maganaris  
Belmont, CA 94002

**From:** [Mary Knopf](#)  
**To:** [City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** My view on Belmont police department  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 14, 2020 10:34:11 PM

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Hello,

I am a long-time resident of Belmont and I love this town. Belmont is where I chose to raise my family. It's where I've paid property taxes for the last 26 years. I am also a nurse practitioner and have cared for many of the residents in our community over the years. For the most part I have considered Belmont to be a progressive town. I appreciate our independence as a town, our community spirit and overall welcoming attitude. In the 26 years I've lived in Belmont I can say I have had some positive interactions with the police. My car died at the base of Belmont Canyon Rd and officers came to my house at 1 am to make sure I made it home. I appreciated that concern. When my 5 year old daughter was screaming because her nail polish didn't match her dress a neighbor called the Belmont police to check in on us (seriously). The officer quickly assessed the fashion crisis, apologized and left. I appreciated his professionalism.

That said there are a few things I find disturbing in the town of Belmont. Members of the community call the police to solve problems that could easily be managed by people with good communication skills. The police were called when my pre-adolescent son and his friends were too loud in the library. The next day he was cited for skateboarding on our street. When he was a teenager and shoplifted an apple from Lunardi's the manager called the police. In most any other town I don't think police would waste their time with this type of stuff. My son did plenty of very stupid (sometimes illegal) things and I'm not saying that he was actually ever in the right. What I felt at the time though was that the police response was out of proportion to the "crime." As a result I believe the teenage boys I knew lost respect for the police. Unfortunately I lost some respect for the police observing their interactions with junior high school and high school kids as well.

I know there are times when a police presence is necessary, there is evil and violence in the world, drugs in our schools. I just wish people's first reaction during a conflict wasn't to call 911. In doing so we send a message to our kids that we need the police to solve all our problems. My guess is that the majority of calls the police receive in our town are not regarding violent crimes requiring a show of force. I work with mentally ill people in our community and when they are decompensating we ask the police to determine if they are a danger to themselves or others, whether they need to be "5150'd" and taken against their will to a psychiatric facility. As a nurse practitioner who works with mentally ill people I am not allowed to make that determination.

In the past I would have thought it was crazy to "defund" the police. In light of recent events though I've been imagining a community where we didn't use armed people to respond to the types of situations I described above. I would be excited to craft a community where people learned there are other ways to resolve conflict, a community where teenagers had respect for the people who cared about their wellbeing .

I work with isolated seniors, people living in poverty and people struggling with mental illness in our community. I can tell you these groups desperately need our help to survive these times. There are much better ways to invest in our community and its

wellbeing than by giving half of the budget to the police department. Proactively helping these groups prevents reliance on the police to solve their problems after the fact.

I would be happy to share my ideas for how to develop programs to assist vulnerable people in our community. For now, I want to express that I feel deeply that there are other means for solving problems than by calling the police, there are programs that could be implemented to prevent crime, we can teach people how to think creatively to solve problems. It would be a much, much better message to send to people that we care about them, not that we're here to punish them after they've made some bad choices.

Thank you,

Mary Knopf

**From:** [Terry Shea](#)  
**To:** [City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** online public safety listening forum on Wednesday, July 15,  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 8, 2020 2:22:09 PM

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Council members,

During my tenure living in Belmont I have had and seen nothing but positive interactions with the city police department. My perception is they have a difficult job which they perform in an exemplary manner.

I do not prescribe to what some promote "defund the police". The police budget should not be "defunded" or more directly put, cut. Doing so will only sap already stretched resources and put the public safety at harm. Let the police continue to maintain the safety of residents and do so with fully budgeted resources.

Terry Shea

**From:** [John Houston](#)  
**To:** [City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** Policing Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 7, 2020 9:37:20 AM

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I will try to log in for next week's comments on the police. That being said, for the most part I think they do an outstanding job and have little in the way of complaints. I will bring up one incident that was a bit over the top though. For my 50th birthday I had a party with a live band, i had taken steps to notify all my neighbors and invited them all to the party to avoid noise complaints. That step was useless and the police showed up anyway. What was surprising is they showed up in force, six or seven of them in a tactical formation for a noise complaint in a suburban neighborhood. When i explained to them that the music was going off at 10 they did not believe me, then at 10 sharp the band stopped playing... they looked mystified. Anyway, they could have sent one car is my point to ask what was going on. My guests and I all thought you had gone over the top.

**From:** [Valentina E](#)  
**To:** [City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** Public Safety Comment  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 15, 2020 2:43:09 PM

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Hello,

I would like to email and submit a public comment on the policing of Belmont. Although I have not experienced racism and singling out from members of our police force, I am speaking as an ally for those who have experienced mistreatment from the police. Although we seem to a very open and accepting community, people in our community still experience discrimination and mistreatment by officers who are not told that this treatment is wrong. Our community can not continue with a police force that discriminated towards people of different races, and does not treat the members of the community equally. We NEED systemic change in our community, and I request that the City Council establish a community task force to hold our police accountable and take the first steps toward reform and defunding.

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Meredith Larsen](#)  
**To:** [City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** public safety listening forum comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 14, 2020 10:44:46 PM

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Dear Belmont City Leaders,

I am extremely thankful for our fabulous Belmont Police Department. My family has lived in Belmont for 4 years and we have personally benefited from the Belmont Police Department in many ways during the time we have lived here, and have a few positive interactions I would like to mention.

1. Belmont PD heroically came to my aid two years ago when I had an emergency situation with my infant son. During the ordeal, an incredible dispatcher kept me calm during the crisis and a motor officer was there in seconds to aid and comfort us. The motor officer arrived faster than the fire department (who we also greatly appreciate) which is near to our home. Having enough police on staff allows for quick response times and saves lives. I greatly appreciated their skills, kindness and professionalism throughout the situation.
2. Belmont PD has visited our children's school for safety education so that our children will have skills to keep themselves safe, contact 9-1-1 if needed, and feel more comfortable and positively connected with officers. I feel that having an officer who relates well to students, is trained specifically to work with kids, and has relationships with school staff is a huge asset to our schools and community. I am in favor of Belmont continuing school resource officer programs so that our children and school staff have this support. School resource officers perform an integral role within the schools to support staff counselors and administration, and students. I prefer that when school staff need emergency help, that they have access to a school resource officer who they know and trust, and who is trained specifically to work with students.
3. Prior to shelter in place, I have seen Belmont officers doing traffic enforcement around the neighborhood and schools, which I think is extremely important and benefits all people who live here. I love having a department that is proactive and has a focus on community relations, crime prevention and investigations rather than just a reactive model.
4. I was involved in citizen efforts to search for missing Belmont resident, Paul Farmer. The Belmont police Chief Psaila offered to meet with our group in person on multiple occasions to discuss the case and community concerns. His level of concern and community involvement did not go unnoticed.

I strongly believe that good policing takes significant money and

resources. I do not believe that our current city spending on Belmont police is excessive. While some citizens may express that we need to make improvements and redirect funding, I think that it is extremely contradicting to ask our police department to make improvements and in the same breath cut or redirect their funding. Belmont is a wonderful city, in great part due to the police department, and I want to see our department have access to training opportunities, technology and resources to prevent and solve crimes. Some local towns have cut their police specialty units and salaries. Although Belmont is a relatively small town, we need our police investigations unit, traffic enforcement, school resource officers, and community relations programs so that we are being proactive against crime and providing opportunities to build relationships amongst citizens and police that are very much needed. Our officers deserve to have the training and safety equipment that they need. I also think that we need to continue to offer competitive salaries for our police so that we can be selective and continue to attract experienced officers.

Having an exemplary police department and a safe community is certainly a privilege and something that I as a citizen will gladly pay taxes to continue funding. Nothing is more important to me than the safety of my family and my community. I am grateful for everything that these officers sacrifice and do daily to keep us safe.

Sincerely,  
Meredith Larsen  
Belmont resident

**From:** [Misha Young](#)  
**To:** [City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** Public safety listening forum email  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 14, 2020 11:32:54 AM

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I am a homeowner here in Belmont and have mixed experiences with our police department over the last 10 years.

Interactions with my kids during "Coffee with a Cop" have been very positive and I am happy they provide an opportunity to interact with officers apart from when we call on them in times of need. I am also grateful for their quick response when my pregnant wife called 911 in the middle of the night while someone was trying to enter our house.

Other interactions, unfortunately, have been negative or downright disturbing. Including 10 years ago when I ran my business out of Belmont and filed a police report after a client committed fraud. The police woman refused to take down my report and I had to drive to Castro Valley and file there. During the encounter she was rude and insisted that because I waited 6 months to file, that I must be making it up. This type of victim shaming has no place in Belmont.

I also experienced unprofessional and illegal behavior on two different occasions with one of our traffic enforcement officers back when I drove a not so new car. This officer would pull me over while stopped at a light (After following all traffic rules), then proceed to find a fix-it offense during the stop and cite me for it. The officer even fabricated a radar gun reading to intimidate me. These interactions went away when I bought a new car. I do not feel safe dropping my child off at preschool and outfitted our family cars with dash cameras, not for criminals, but because I have lasting anxiety of our own Police. I grew up in Los Gatos and got used to a policy we called "driving while dented". I fear that we have the same policy here.

I would like assurances from my council and chief Psaila that Belmont traffic enforcement does not have a policy of targeting "out of place" cars and that if a citizen or commuter is driving safely and not committing a moving violation, that he or she will not be stopped and cited.

I am not your prey, nor are you my predator. We are on the same team.

Signed,

Caring Belmont citizen

**From:** [paola divito](#)  
**To:** [City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** PUBLIC SAFETY LISTENING FORUM JULY 15TH- PERSONAL COMMENT  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 14, 2020 2:18:12 PM

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To Whom it May Concern,

I am unable to attend the Forum at 6pm on July 15th. I am emailing you to provide my comment, my statement. Thank you for reading it and you are welcome to share it during the forum if you deem fit.

My name is Paola. I have been a resident of Belmont as an adult for 12 consecutive years now, and have been running my own business in Redwood City for the last 8 years. All 4 of my siblings and I were students of IHM, Immaculate Heart of Mary, in Belmont. My father moved into Belmont 40 years ago as an Italian restaurant owner. He hosted many Police Department celebrations, he tells me! We lived in San Mateo, but he had to buy a home in Belmont to house his employees. Discrimination was so prominent in the 1970s, no one would rent to them because they were of Central American descent.

I might have been naive enough to think that we've come a long way since then but thus far certain experiences in my life have showed me otherwise. In 2012, I started a 4 year long partnership with Raphael, son of a caucasian mother and Japanese father, and second generation to be born and raised in Redwood City/Emerald Hills. Because Raphael happened to be born with darker skin than the rest of his siblings, he spent his childhood and teenage years bearing prejudice from his teachers and peers.

Walking alongside footsteps of his adult life, I saw how the manifestation of this perpetuated further mistreatment and prejudice from law enforcement, our police.

The first time I became aware of this was after getting pulled over at 8:30am one morning. I was driving a slow 1986 vehicle and was pulled over for 'speeding', the officer said. Sure enough, he immediately asked Raphael (who was merely sitting in my passenger seat) to show him his ID. He ran his record and was surprised to find nothing.

On a different occasion, Raphael was riding his bicycle around 9pm towards my house. Upon his delay, I looked out my window and saw that two police men had pulled him over, 100ft from my home. I came out in my pajamas thinking I could clear up any confusion, explaining that he was simply on his way to my house. They barked at me to step back and told me not to get involved. Then I watched sadly as they did nothing less than bully him with his words, as if to get a rise out of him. Raphael struggled to stay calm and he succeeded. You must understand that when somebody has endured unfair treatment their whole life, it is a perfect and natural response to feel triggered and angry. Again, after running his ID and record, they were displeased and disappointed to find nothing. No apology, no human consideration for their rudeness.

Racial profiling is alive in Belmont and we cannot keep pretending that it is of no one's concern. People like Raphael, who have been here their whole lives, are being treated poorly by the people that are supposed to protect us.

In 2017, Raphael's perpetuated emotional instability came to a forefront. It was around 11pm at night. He was drunk. He broke down my front door and ended up hiding in the bushes,

crying and threatening to take his life with a knife he was holding in his hand. This situation was scary for my neighbors and awful for me, to say the least. I didn't know what to do but the one thing I was certain of was that calling the police would only put Raphael's life in more danger. I crouched helplessly to my knees, crying on my driveway, and looked up to the sky for some kind of guidance. It was a miracle- a star instantly shot down directly above me. I got the strength to manage and eventually bring the situation to a peaceful and safe close.

I feel deeply angry that during a traumatizing moment like that one, I did not feel like I could call the one resource available in my community that is supposed to keep me and my loved ones safe. I think about how many other people probably do the same- put themselves and their loved ones at risk because the police has become something to fear. That's right- that is how we know it is not working the manner it is intended- We fear the men and women who are supposed to be contributing to create an environment of safety and peace in our neighborhoods.

If you can't take inherent racism out of your police force, then it is crucial that you provide adequate emergency services that are humane and meet some kind of mental health procedure standards. **IT IS POSSIBLE TO DISSOLVE EXACERBATED SITUATIONS WITH COMPASSION, PATIENCE AND PEACEFUL MEANS. NOT MORE VIOLENCE.** Let that be the model we teach our children. Not the brutal force that these policemen are exuding when they follow robot 'protocols'.

Thank you.

**From:** [Marit Parten](#)  
**To:** [City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** Wed night comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 14, 2020 8:21:42 AM  
**Attachments:** [BPD.pdf](#)

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Hi Davina and Julia,

I can't attend Wed. night's event, but want my comments, please, to be read aloud.

Thanks for listening, and I do hope some of the kids I know who have been targeted will indeed attend and speak about their experiences.

Best,  
Marit

Marit Parten  
Single mom of 3  
Belmont resident for 18 years

Thank you for your time as we openly evaluate the way the world is evolving regarding policing in America, and where it lies currently here in Belmont.

I have no personal issues to address with the Belmont Police Department, nor any police department in any city I've ever resided, as I am a white woman acutely aware of my privilege.

Raising 3 bi-racial dark-skinned Asian kids (now two teens and one preteen) here in Belmont has been mostly fine regarding policing. Until my kids became teenagers, I'd never heard of police targeting and profiling within our community. Because I do not have any personal experiences, only the stories from those who've been targeted, my whiteness is even more apparent to me.

Imagine if the teenagers in our community had respect, not fear, for our police department and the School Resource Officers on their campuses. If kids felt emotionally safe, not watched and paralyzed when uniformed officers are on their campus, schools would be a place where kids could feel free and safe to be themselves amongst their peers and teachers.

As adults, can we remind ourselves, truly empathize, how it felt to be a teenager? Those odd and insecure in-between years before adulthood and after childhood, with few safe places to "hang-out" and just "be"?

There aren't places for teenagers to gather in Belmont without the assumption of being up to something problematic, especially if living in a smaller home or apartment within a larger family and no place to gather with friends. Being out and about walking with a group of friends (pre-COVID of course) is an automatic suspicion of problem to most adults and particularly police. As a former middle school teacher, I would inject myself in groups gathering to assure it was safe for all, careful to not instill fear but to assure emotional and physical safety for teens while careful to allow them to be teens.

I could explain my parental anger with my own daughter being followed by BPD twice, and I could tell you my own children's great distaste and disrespect for the Belmont Police, but instead I want to leave you with three questions I'd appreciate feedback on, please;

1. **What is the need for SRO on our school campuses?** While I realize this is a school board decision, since school resource officers are still on campuses (with a now increased budget for more resources this coming school year), I ask SROs to reflect on why instilling any additional fears is needed in academic life when being a teenager is already hard enough. I have never heard of a police officer having stopped a school shooting, anywhere. There is overwhelming national evidence showing that they aren't making our kids safe. And I have heard endless targeting of brown and black kids at Carlmont High School (frisking, backpack checks, kids removed from sports events without proper reasoning, amongst many other youth complaints –witnessed by kids of all ethnicities on campus, not just the ones being targeted).

2. **With the mass amount captured on body cameras, who looks at the footage?** If the police chief, or an ethics commission of some sort, could view results of parallel situations when police pull over or involve themselves in a scenario, I would assume the ones ending with tickets or arrests are far greater with brown or black citizens than white. I do pay attention to those I see pulled over and rarely is it a white person in a nice car in Belmont. I also know it's who you know, on many occasion, to "get off" or get away with something in our community.
3. **Why does it take so many officers to be involved in one concern?** I've noticed time and time again an absurd number of officers involved in one issue. ie: one example to many similar I've seen over the years, last week a man, possibly homeless or intoxicated, in daylight hours, was surrounded by 3 officers in front of Walgreens. As quoted by city council member Stone regarding the lean (budgetary) BPD we have, "We average about 3-4 officers on patrol with 1 supervisor." Thus, I wonder why all resources need to be focused on one man? Are they not trained to handle or deescalate situations solely without the need for multiple back-up officers?

Thank you for your consideration and understanding regarding these trying times for community members as we finally share openly issues within the Belmont Police Department. I do hope we'll will see great changes in days ahead as you hopefully align with the **9 Policing Principles** as cities far larger than Belmont have aligned.