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## News

# Lieutenant to succeed Chief Ux

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**By HATTIE BERNSTEIN**

**Staff Writer**

HOLLIS – A selectman called Police Chief Russell Ux’s retirement on May 31 “bittersweet,” echoing other officials who praised Ux for his professionalism during a 30-year career that included stints as patrol officer, animal control officer and communications center director.

Ux’s retirement was announced last week at a special Board of Selectmen meeting.

He is planning to spend more time with his family and will be succeeded by Lt. James Sartell.

“I have big shoes to fill,” said Sartell, a 17-year law enforcement veteran, who started his career in 1994 as a state corrections officer and served as patrol officer, detective and sergeant before he was promoted to lieutenant in 2006.

In prepared remarks, Selectman Chairman David Petry noted that Ux had served “in every capacity at the Police Department from dog catcher to chief of police.”

Ux, who was appointed chief five years ago, also had oversight of the department’s vehicles, and because of his skills in diagnosing and fixing cars, he was affectionately nicknamed “Chief Valvoline.”

Officials said Ux approached every assignment with the same work ethic: Whether he was sweeping the floor or presenting a budget, he was meticulous.

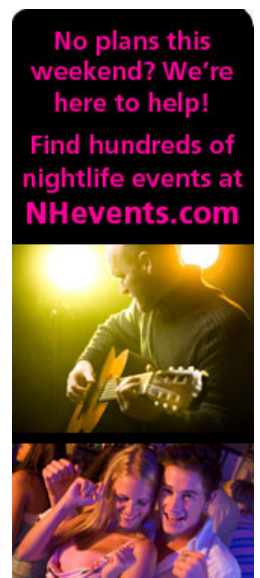
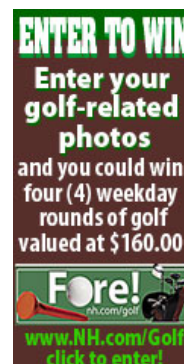
“He was cleaning up the Police Department when I met him 26 years ago, and he still does that, even as chief,” said Selectman Vahrij Manoukian, owner and operator of the Hollis Pharmacy. “He’s taken this department from baby steps to one of the most professional departments in the state of New Hampshire.”

Added Selectman Peter Band: “He’s leaving a job well-done and well-appreciated by all in the community and by the Board of Selectmen. We consider Russ a friend and a trusted colleague.”

When it was his turn to speak, Selectman Mark LeDoux reminded his colleagues of the challenges the chief, and his department, have faced in recent years, “fires, floods, dams breaking.”



Staff photo by Hattie Bernstein Hollis Police Chief Russell Ux, right, will retire June 1. His successor will be second in command Lt. James Sartell, left. They are shown at Hollis Police Station on Friday, following an early morning selectmen’s meeting at which the announcement was made.



"You guys are selfless and really understand public service," LeDoux said, addressing not only the Police Department heads, but also Fire Chief Rick Towne and Public Works Director Jeff Babel.

Towne said that shortly after Ux joined the police department, Ux asked permission to carry firefighting equipment in his cruiser. After, Ux often assisted on fire calls.

"Russ is probably the only police officer I know of who back in the day begged and received fire gear to carry in the police cruiser," Towne said. "He wasn't afraid to dig in the ashes with the fire marshal."

Towne said he suspected that Ux was planning to retire when, "about a year ago, he turned in his gear."

Under Ux's leadership, Towne said, the town police and fire departments maintained a cooperative working relationship.

"In lots of towns and cities, there's conflict between police and fire departments," Towne said, crediting Ux for setting the example and following it.

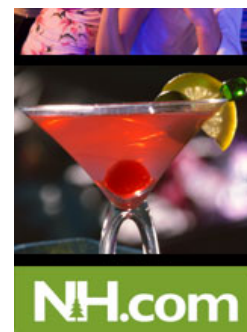
And the chief's contributions to the town weren't lost on employees at Town Hall, including Assistant Town Administrator Cathy Hoffman, who said, "What I admire most about Russ is his dedication not only to the community and to the police department, but to all of us. I wish him the best."

The community is invited to an open house to honor Ux on May 25, starting at 5 p.m. at the Lawrence Barn on Depot Road.

Sartell will be sworn in as the town's 12th police chief on May 31. Sartell, who recently earned a master's degree in criminal justice from Boston University, has served as the department's second-in-command since 2006.

"It will be a seamless transition," Selectman Chairman Petry said in a prepared statement.

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