

# UPTON HIRES POLICE CHIEF



*Newly-hired, Upton Police Chief, Brian Meals is set to begin his duties in May.*

**By Brittany Trandahl,  
Gazette Reporter**

Following the resignation of former Upton Police Chief, Susan Bridge in October of 2024, Upton has been without a municipal police force. Relying heavily on the Weston County Sheriff's Office and Reserve Officer, Chief Mike Staiger of Lingle-Fort Larmie for local enforcement, but with the arrival of Chief Brian Meals, that's all about that change.

During a special meeting of the Upton Town Council on March 25, Councilwoman Tiffany McMillan moved, Councilman Rick Rothleutner seconded a motion to approve the revised letter of conditional offer of employment to Brian Meals for the position of Upton Chief of Police. Councilman Joe Watt voted nay, all others voted aye, and the motion carried. This negotiation process has been ongoing between the Council and Meals for the last couple weeks, since he learned of the opening through the Council's national employment outreach.

Stepping into the role as Upton's Chief of Police and sole officer (for the time being), Meals is tentatively set to start his duties in May. He brings 34 years of experience in law enforcement, most recently serving in rural

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where they averaged 10,000-13,000 calls per year that ranged from petty theft to homicides. He leans on that experience to create his 'old-fashioned' approach to law enforcement.

"I treat everyone as if they were my relative," commented Meals. "Everyone deserves to keep their dignity, even in a difficult situation and I want people to know me as personable and approachable, that they can ask me anything."

Meals added that with his many years of experience, "there's nothing the Town of Upton can throw at me that I haven't seen or done." Emphasizing the instincts and expertise he has built over decades of service, he continued, "I no longer question what has to be done - I just act."

Upton Mayor Nick Trandahl expressed his enthusiasm for Chief Meals' arrival, emphasizing both his qualifications and the significance of having a dedicated law enforcement officer in town.

"We're so excited to have Brian and his wife Maribeth make their way out here from Pennsylvania and join us here in Upton and Weston County. I couldn't be more thrilled to have a law enforcement officer

as experienced and proactive as Chief Meals taking the helm of the Upton Police Department. In Chief Meals' background, he has decades of extensive municipal and county policing experience, experience in working closely with other agencies, and has worked very closely with schools, successfully securing grants and funding for school resource officers and K-9 units."

"It's been a long and difficult search to finally land a good experienced candidate for Upton Police Chief without any red flags, as law enforcement agencies around the country are facing staffing shortages. Upton residents will find Chief Meals to be a strong, kind, reliable, and honest addition to the Town of Upton, and a great partner and resource to the Weston County Sheriff's Office, Weston County School District No. 7, and the Joint Dispatch Powers Board. Make sure to give Chief Meals a warm welcome when you see him out and about in the 'Best Town on Earth' in the near future."

Mayor Trandahl also extended his gratitude to Weston County Sheriff Bryan Colvard and the Weston County Sheriff's Office for stepping in to assist Upton while the town was without a municipal police force. "The Town is so grateful to the Sheriff's Office for doing a lot of heavy lifting while we searched for a new Police Chief, especially when the Town faced unique public safety issues."

For Meals and his wife, Maribeth, along with their chocolate lab, Leo, the decision to move to Upton was about more than just a job - it's about a way of life. "Everyone in Wyoming is just so genuinely nice and friendly, and once we came to Upton to look at properties, it just felt right. The people were so inviting and warm," he shared.

They're looking forward to embracing the slower pace of life and are excited to explore everything Wyoming has to offer - camping, shooting sports, wildlife, and the great outdoors.

Meals' presence marks an important shift for the community, ensuring that Upton once again has dedicated municipal coverage, focused on Upton's needs and growth. As he settles into his new role, Chief Meals hopes to get the department functioning and up to speed, while also becoming a familiar and trusted figure in town. He's also looking to take his experience in the field into training younger officers and really creating a department that people would want to work in

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