

July 2024

## Employee Spotlight

### Dana Gillis

#### Systems Manager, Belmont Facilities Department

Each month, Town Administrator Patrice Garvin highlights a single employee whose hard work and dedication exemplifies what it means to be an employee for the Town of Belmont. In the Employee Spotlight series, we are able to shine a light on incredible employee achievements and provide an opportunity to introduce and recognize Belmont Town employees throughout the Belmont community.

In this month's Bulletin, Town Administrator Garvin would like to recognize Dana Gillis, the Town of Belmont's Systems Manager in the Facilities Department. Beginning in 2018, Dana has for 6 years been a steadfast member of the Facilities team, playing a vital role in operation and maintenance of Town buildings.

As Systems Manager, Dana provides supervision, upkeep of a preventative maintenance schedule and technical expertise to ensure that buildings are operational by specifically managing building HVAC equipment and automation controls. Under the leadership of Belmont's Director of Facilities Management, David Blazon, Dana helps to manage the building operations of over one-million square feet of building space across 18 Town and School buildings. David Blazon described Dana as a "dedicated professional who is well-experienced at what he does and is an important member of our team."

From an early age Dana found himself interested in how things worked. He explains, "its hard not to get my hands dirty. I've always been interested in the mechanical side of things. Even as a kid I can remember taking apart toys and putting them back together." Dana is a "Mr. Fix-it" for sure, and the hands-on approach of someone who rebuilt a '79 Camaro in his driveway when he was young does not go unnoticed here in Belmont.

Belmont wasn't an unfamiliar place when Dana joined the Facilities team, as he explains: "I've been a life-long resident of Waltham—so not too far away. I can remember back when I was playing hockey in High School and we played a few games against Belmont at the old rink." So, when Dana came to Belmont after working as a pipefitter for 28 years, he had an idea of the community. In 2018, when Dana was hired as the Town's HVAC Technician, his pipefitting experience served him well. After excelling as the HVAC Tech, Dana began his current role of Systems Manager in 2021. This is a credit to Dana's drive, consistent attention to detail on the job and overall ability.

Dana didn't mention who came out on top in those hockey games of his youth, but it's safe to assume that he didn't see himself at the time helping to manage the operations of the old Belmont hockey rink, let alone, being one of the many shepherds of Belmont's soon to be new hockey rink. Dana has come to contribute much toward the changing face of many Town and School buildings. From the "very first shovel in the ground" to today he has helped to be a part of seeing the Belmont Middle and High School Building Project come to fruition and now is making contributions to the development of the new library and rink.



With new projects changing and updating Town and School buildings for current and future generations, Dana and the members of the Facilities team recognize the importance of their role to maintain these community spaces. Change and development is a result of the hard work of many throughout the community to achieve and that achievement is a process with many steps and one of the key steps is maintenance. Dana explains, "The Facilities Department is maintenance focused, we want to make sure that we are keeping up the maintenance on all the equipment in these buildings new and existing to ensure that they function for the entirety of their usable life."

The importance of maintenance comes into focus when Dana considers his work over the past six years. "I am really proud to have played a role on the Belmont Middle and High School project. I was able to work closely with the contractors to make sure that Belmont received a building that it can be proud of. Now, we have the responsibility to maintain it and that means understanding its operations, maintaining an energy plan to achieve net-zero energy and keeping up preventative maintenance to keep Belmont proud of it."

Additionally, Dana discussed the importance of maintenance assessments to the Town's existing buildings including the Wellington School. "We are in the process of recommissioning the HVAC systems at the Wellington School, which should be completed by the end of the summer in time for the students returning to school. Just with the work we have already completed, we have already noticed a significant decrease in work order submissions." The completion of this maintenance will help create better conditions for both teachers and students to do what they do.

Dana's day-to-day work doesn't come without its challenges, especially when it comes to regulating the temperature across 18 Town and School buildings in a New England climate or trying to maintain equipment that, in some instances, has passed its usable life. Dana faces these challenges with the following approach: "I take one day at a time and try to maintain a positive attitude each day. There is always going to be a problem to solve and some problems may need to be solved more than once. Its good to leave work at work and have a thick skin."

Outside of work Dana enjoys spending time with his family, boating, fishing, woodworking, working on cars and taking on projects around the house. Dana would also like to acknowledge his fellow Town and School employees and express his gratitude for the good work they do.