

Owen Bebeau sworn in as Special Sheriff at Bristol County Sheriff's Office

"Bristol County has a new Special Sheriff. Owen Bebeau, chief of staff at the Bristol County Sheriff's Office, was sworn in as Special Sheriff Wednesday night by Sheriff Paul Heroux during the graduation ceremony for the training academy.

Bebeau raised his right hand and repeated the oath of office offered by Sheriff Heroux before a large crowd in the auditorium of Westport High School. Special Sheriff is a title among Sheriff's Offices in Massachusetts that designates an individual who will have the authority and executive powers of the Sheriff should the Sheriff be unable to perform their duties. Other states call the Special Sheriff an Undersheriff.

The Special Sheriff is similar to a vice-president, lieutenant governor, or other roles that signify a second-in-command.

"It's a tremendous honor to be the Special Sheriff here at the BCSO," said Bebeau, 62. "This organization is filled with professionals working around the clock to rehabilitate inmates and make our communities safer places to live and raise families. Corrections is a tough workplace, and I take the responsibilities of Special Sheriff, the responsibilities of others' safety, very seriously."

Sheriff Heroux said naming Bebeau as Special Sheriff was an easy choice based on his experiences.

"Owen and I have worked together for more than five years, starting with our time in Attleboro," Sheriff Heroux said. "Owen was the Personnel Director and the department head I worked more closely with than any other. Owen proceeds on complicated issues slowly and methodically. He knows what is

important to me and will make good decisions in my absence.

“I choose a civilian over a member of the security staff because I believe that civilian control over a paramilitary or military organization is important for accountability to the people.”

The BCSO has not had a Special Sheriff since Bruce Assad retired during the transition period at the beginning of 2023.

Bebeau joined the BCSO on Feb. 6 after eight years as the personnel director for the city of Attleboro, where he worked with then-Mayor Heroux. He also has previous experience in local government and information technology in Woonsocket, R.I. Currently as BCSO chief of staff, he heads the personnel department, which focuses on a range of human resources services from recruitment and retention to retirements, benefits, contract negotiations, and more.

Bebeau is a graduate of the University of Rhode Island and lives in Blackstone with his wife, Cathy. He can be reached at OwenBebeau@bcso-ma.org.”-Bristol County Sheriff’s Office.