

About the Police Department

In 1884 the Town of Douglas put its ordinances in writing. Among those ordinances was the declaration of the Powers of the Marshal and Police Officers. The following is the exact wording of the original ordinance:

"The marshal of said town shall possess the same powers and be subject to the same liabilities possessed and conferred by statute upon constables in executing the orders of the town council and in enforcing the by-laws and ordinances of said town. He shall be Chief of Police and shall at all times to make and order arrests with proper process for any offense against the ordinances of the town or laws of the territory and bring the offenders to trials before the proper officer and to arrest with process in all cases where such offense shall be committed or attempted in his presence or where he has received satisfactory information that such offense has been committed.

The police officers of said town shall have power to arrest all offenders against the laws of the Territory or said town by day or by night in the same manner as the marshal and keep them in town prison or other place to prevent their escape until trial can be had before the proper officer. Such police officers in the discharge of their duty shall be subject to the orders of the Mayor and Marshal only.

If appearing to his Council that an emergency exists it is hereby declared that this ordinance shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage by the town council of said town.

Approved Oct 22nd, 1884."

The term for the office of Marshal, as well as all town offices, was held until the second Tuesday in May of the following year according to another ordinance passed in 1884. City records show that J. Overman was paid \$100 salary as Town Marshal on April 7, 1888. By 1926, this salary had increased to \$250 and F.T. Cummings was the Town Marshal. That payment was approved by Mayor LeBar and members of the town council.

Compare the earliest ordinance with the current ones that address the duties of the Chief of Police and Police Officers:

"2.24.010 Police Chief--Duties.

The police department shall be headed by the police chief who shall be the commanding officer of the police force. He shall have the following responsibilities and powers:

- A. To direct the police work of the town and be responsible for the enforcement of the law and order throughout the town;
- B. To prescribe such rules and regulations relating to discipline, the wearing of uniforms, proper performance of duty and the wearing and carrying of firearms on and off duty, as shall be approved by the town administrator;
- C. The performance of other related duties as directed by the town administrator or town council.

2.24.020 Powers of police officers.

- A. The chief of police and any sworn officer shall have all the powers granted to peace officers by the laws of this state.
- B. Police officers shall have power to arrest all persons found in the act of violating any law or provisions of this code or law of the state or aiding or abetting in any such violation, and shall arrest any person found under circumstances which would warrant a reasonable man in believing that such person had committed a crime.
- C. Police officers shall have the power and authority, and it shall be their duty to serve and execute warrants and other process for the summoning, apprehension and commitment of any person charged with a violation of any provision of this code."