

Minutes
Regular Meeting
115 N. Thomson, Iowa, LA 70647
March 9, 2026

Mayor Watkins and Town Council met in Regular session this date in compliance with all requirements as to notice.

Mayor Watkins reported on projects planned and in process; update on Shakey's property in regard to cleanup; announced letter received from DEQ stating they have included our project for upgrades to the oxidation pond as priority funding, and will notify us if selected; meeting with the pony league; and completion of installation of the fence around the park.

Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

Mayor Watkins called roll. Present: Mayor Douglas Watkins; Council Members: Gerald Guidry, Joe Becnel, Daniel Hennigan, and Vernessa Guillory. Absent was Council Member Julie Fontenot. A quorum was established.

Also, present were Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett; Town Attorney Russell Stutes III; Chief of Police Keith Vincent and about 6 people.

Invocation was said by Council Member Joe Becnel, followed by the pledge.

It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to adopt the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

It was **moved by Vernessa Guillory, seconded by Joe Becnell** to approve minutes, as submitted, for regular meeting February 9, 2026. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins announced the next item, report of finance. Town Clerk Cindy Mallett gave the monthly and year-to-date financial report. She asked if there were any questions. There were no comments or questions.

Mayor read item #2 on the agenda. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Joe Becnel**, upon the recommendation of building code inspection service LLC, to send notice of hearing to owner of 106 Ruby Street, Iowa, LA Jessica Lynn Hardy. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item #3 of the agenda. It was **moved by Joe Becnel, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to advertise for bids for the upgrade of Sewer Main Lift Station at Hwy 90, Project #5030, an estimated cost of \$400,000.00. Mayor Watkins explained the need for this project. Mr. Kenneth Landry asked for verification of location and spoke of other concerns. Mayor Watkins answered his questions. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item #4 of the agenda. It was **moved by Danniell Hnnigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to hire Beau Desormeaux with Domingue, Szabo & Associates, Inc., for engineering and project management of the upgrade of Sewer Main Lift Station at Hwy 90, Project #5030. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item #5 of the agenda. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any questions or comments. Council Member Daniel Hennigan recommended striking the second sentence of paragraph "D" of the resolution. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to approve Resolution 2026-03, A Resolution repealing and replacing resolution 2019-16; to establish a process for participation and conduct in Mayor and Town Council meetings for the Town of Iowa, Louisiana with the recommended strike from the resolution. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any other comments. No comments were made. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2026-03

A resolution repealing and replacing resolution 2019-16; to establish a process for participation and conduct in Mayor and Town Council meetings for the Town of Iowa, Louisiana

WHEREAS, in order to establish an orderly manner of allowing public comments on agenda items the Town of Iowa adopts the following rules:

- A. Comments shall be limited to three (3) minutes. Each speaker may only speak once and there will be no donation of speaker time permitted.
- B. Speaker may comment on any agenda item upon the reading of the agenda item and/or before a record vote is taken on the agenda item.
- C. Comments should be addressed to the whole Board regarding the issue at hand and not be directed personally at a Council Member, Staff Member, Mayor, other speaker or member of the audience.
- D. Offensive, threatening or inappropriate language will not be tolerated.
- E. Individuals who do not wish to address the Mayor and Council in a meeting but would like to share comments and/or documents for the record are encouraged to do so through the town clerk's email address, townclerk@iowala.org. Comments or documents shall be completed and submitted by 5:00 pm the day before the meeting.

WHEREAS, in order to establish proper decorum for recording a Mayor and Town Council meeting the Town of Iowa hereby adopts the following rules:

- A. The method of recording used is reasonable and not disruptive. Lighting and lighting equipment is not allowed. Devices acceptable include but not limited to Still shot cameras, Cellular (smart) phones, camcorders, digital voice or tape devices, etc...
- B. Person recording is required to set up equipment or record from the last row of the Council Room.

WHEREAS, If necessary, the Mayor may request law enforcement to remove any person violating the provisions of this Resolution.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, governing authority of Iowa, Louisiana, that they do hereby, in regular session convened, adopt the process for participation and conduct in Mayor and Town Council meetings for the Town of Iowa, Louisiana.

Approved and adopted this 9th day of March,
2026 .

Douglas N Watkins
Mayor

ATTEST:

Cynthia Mallett, MMC
Municipal Clerk

Mayor Watkins read item #6 of the agenda. It was moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Joe Becnel to approve Resolution for the DEQ Municipal Water Pollution Prevention Audit Report for January 2025-December 2025. The motion carried unanimously.

Permit #:LA 0043605

MWPP Resolution

Resolved that the Town of Iowa informs the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality that the following actions were taken by Town Councilmen:

1. Resolved the Municipal Water Pollution Prevention Environmental Audit Report for January 2025 — December 2025, which is attached to this resolution.
2. Set forth the following actions necessary to maintain permit requirements contained in the Louisiana Pollution Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) permit, Number LA0043605.
 - A. To continue being good environmental stewards by maintaining our wastewater treatment plant and continuing required analytical analysis in accordance with our current LDEQ permit, including monthly monitoring of influent CBOD.

Passed by a majority/unanimous vote of the Town Council on this 9th day of March, Two Thousand and Twenty-Six.

Cynthia Mallett, MMC
CLERK

Mayor Watkins read item #7 of the agenda. It was **moved** by Vernessa Guillory, **seconded** by Joe Becnel to approve Resolution 2026-04, A resolution creating a Mayor's Youth Council and establishing Rules and Procedure for the Town of Iowa, Louisiana. Mayor Watkins gave reasons he wishes to establish this youth council. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any questions. Council Member Daniel Hennigan asked if home schooled students will be eligible. Mayor Watkins stated that he did not have a problem with that. No other comments were made. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2026-04

A resolution creating a Mayor's Youth Council and establishing Rules of Procedure for the Town of Iowa, Louisiana

- WHEREAS,** The Town Council of the Town of Iowa believes strongly that Iowa is and should continue to be a family-friendly community; and
- WHEREAS,** The Town Council of the Town of Iowa recognizes that encouragement and nurturing of families is best achieved when its youth are empowered, supported, and informed so that they can be productive members of the community; and
- WHEREAS,** In an effort to realize its commitment to youth, the Town of Iowa wishes to establish a Mayor's Youth Council and further establish rules of procedure for the purpose of dealing with all issues coming before said council.
- NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Town Council of the Town of Iowa that a Mayor's Youth Council shall be hereby established, all as stated above; and further, that the following shall hereby establish rules of procedure, to-wit:

SECTION 1: Establishment

A Mayor's Youth Council is hereby established and shall be referred to as ("Youth Council").

SECTION 2: Purpose

The Youth Council shall study, investigate, plan, implement and advise the Town on all matters related to youth. In particular, the Youth Council is charged with developing and promulgating policies, programs, and services that empower, support, and inform youth; that create a family-friendly community; and that enables and encourages youth to be productive members of the community. The Youth Council shall serve as an advisory body to the Town on all matters dealing with the youth of said community.

SECTION 3: Power and Duties

- 1) The Youth Council shall have all the powers granted herein and shall perform all the duties as provided herein.
- 2) The Youth Council shall adopt rules and regulations for the conduct of its meetings and for defining the duties of its members, officers, and committees.
- 3) The Youth Council shall work with the Mayor, Town Council, and the Town staff to develop and implement policies that focus on youth.
- 4) The Youth Council shall advise the Mayor, Town Council and Town staff on important issues that relate to youth.
- 5) The Youth Council shall facilitate the planning and organization of youth summits and regular neighborhood meetings throughout the city.
- 6) The Youth Council shall build partnerships with individuals, groups, and organizations that impact both youth and families.
- 7) The Youth Council shall partner with individuals, groups, and organizations in the planning and implementation of services, support, and opportunities for Iowa's youth and families.
- 8) The Youth Council shall carry out and implement other directives from the Mayor, Town Council, and Town Staff.

SECTION 4: Membership

The Youth Council shall consist of no more than twenty (20) voting members, all of whom shall attend Iowa High School.

SECTION 5: Terms of Office

The members of the Youth Council shall serve in such capacity without compensation. All terms of office shall begin, on August 1st and expire on July 31st. The terms of office of the Youth Council shall be as follows, to-wit:

- 1) The terms for all Youth Council members/officers shall be a period of (1) year.
- 2) Youth Council members may be recommended for one (1) additional reappointment.

SECTION 6: Organization and Rules

- 1) At its first meeting of each year, the Youth Council shall elect officers who shall serve a one (1) year term. All officers may be eligible for reelection for up to one (1) additional one year term. Officers shall, at a minimum, consist of a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary.
- 2) The Youth Council shall adopt such rules and regulations governing its procedures, as it deems necessary or advisable, and shall keep a record of its proceedings, which record shall be a public record.
- 3) The Youth Council shall meet on a date and a time set for in its rules and regulations. All members shall be conducted consistent with the said rules and regulations, Lawrason Act, and the Town of Iowa Municipal Code. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of members.

SECTION 7: Absences

Any member of the Youth Council who is unable to attend a meeting shall notify the Chair or staff representative, in advance of meeting, stating the reason for his/her absence. Three (3) unexcused absences shall constitute the resignation of the member. Final determination will be made by the Youth Council Executive Committee.

SECTION 8: Removal

Members of the Youth Council may be removed by the Mayor and the Youth Council Executive Committee for inefficiency, neglect of duty or malfeasance while in office. The Mayor shall file a written statement with the Staff Liaison stating the reasons of such removal.

SECTION 9: Compensation and Reimbursement of Expenditures

Members of the Youth Council shall serve without compensation; provided, however, that each member may be reimbursed for an actual expenditure (authorized in advance of the expense being made) reasonably incurred by him/her in connection with his/her duties as a member of the Youth Council.

SECTION 10: Vacancies

Vacancies occurring on the Youth Council, other than through the expiration of a term, shall only be filled at the beginning of a new Youth Council year for the remainder of the unexpired term of office. However, up to three (3) vacancies may be appointed annually by remaining youth council members to serve on an interim basis until such time as a permanent appointment is made by the Town Council. An interim member shall have the rights, powers, duties, and obligations of a regular youth council member as specified above.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, governing authority of Iowa, Louisiana, that they do hereby, in regular session convened, adopt the creation of a Mayor's Youth Council and establish rules of procedure for the Town of Iowa, Louisiana.

Approved and adopted this 9th day of
March, 2026 . .

Douglas N. Watkins, Mayor

ATTEST:

Cynthia Mallett, MMC, Clerk

Mayor Watkins read item #8 of the agenda. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Joe Becnel** to end contracts for present internet and VoIP (telephone) services and enter into contract with and between the Town of Iowa and Conterra Networks for the purpose of Internet and VoIP (phone) services; and authorize Mayor Watkins to execute all documents. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any questions. Chief Vincent asked about the ability to record phone calls for his department. It was confirmed that recordings would be included in the contract. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor read item #9 of the agenda. It was **moved by Joe Becnel, seconded by Daniel Hennigan** to table, without date, resolution 2026-01, A resolution of the Town of Iowa Creating a Recreation Advisory Committee. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor asked Chief Vincent to come forward for the next two items of the agenda. Chief Vincent came forward and upon his recommendations the following motions were made:

It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Joe Becnel** to promote Josh McCoy from PFC to SGT. The motion carried unanimously.

It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Joe Becnel** to promote Kevin Loewer from CPL to SGT. The motion carried unanimously.

It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Joe Becnel** to promote Taylor Jackson from PFC to CPL. The motion carried unanimously.

It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to hire Bent Quebodeaux as Patrol Officer. The motion carried unanimously.

It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to hire Gabrielle Beukema as part-time dispatcher. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item #12 of the agenda, Introduction of Ordinance 2026-04, An ordinance annexing certain property into the corporate limits of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, in accordance with the provisions of the Revised Statutes of the State of Louisiana, title 33, Section 172, following the petition of Progressive Merchants, Inc. and due advertisement. Mayor Watkins explained where the annexation is located and asked if there were any questions. Council Member Daniel Hennigan talked about incorporating I-10 interstate. Mayor Watkins explained that an ordinance will be introduced soon that will include land on the north side of the interstate. Mayor Watkins said a letter of no objection from D.O.T.D. would be required to include I-10 interstate.

With no further business to discuss, it was **moved by Joe Becnel, seconded by Daniel Hennigan** to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 pm.

Douglas N Watkins, Mayor

Attest:

Cynthia Mallett MMC, Town Clerk

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Iowa, State of Louisiana, acting as the governing authority of the Town of Iowa, State of Louisiana, will meet on April 13, 2026 at seven (7:00) o'clock p.m., located at Iowa City Hall Meeting Room, 115 N. Thomson Avenue, Iowa, Louisiana at which time there will be a public hearing on the adoption of the below introduced ordinances:

Ordinance 2026-04

An Ordinance annexing certain property into the corporate limits of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, in accordance with the provision of the Revised Statutes for the State of Louisiana, title 33, Section 172, following the petition of Progressive Merchants, Inc. and due advertisement

All interested citizens will have the opportunity to give written or oral comments. Handicapped persons needing assistance or aid should contact City Hall, 337-582-3535 before the meeting. Published in Lake Charles American Press.