

Minutes
Regular Meeting
115 N. Thomson, Iowa, LA 70647
City Hall Meeting Room
October 14, 2024 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Watkins and Town Council met in regular session this date in compliance with all requirements as to notice. Mayor Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

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

Others present were Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett; Town Attorney Eugene Bouquet; Chief of Police Keith Vincent and about 10 citizens.

Invocation was said by Council Member Joe Becnel, followed by Pledge.

It was **moved** by Daniel Hennigan, **seconded** by Vernessa Guillory to amend the agenda to add guest Joseph Thibodeaux. The motion passed unanimously.

It was **moved** by Daniel Hennigan, **seconded** by Joe Becnel to adopt the amended agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

It was **moved** by Vernessa Guillory, **seconded** by Daniel Hennigan to approve minutes as presented for Regular Meeting September 9, 2024. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor read the first item of the agenda; Motion to approve Resolution 2024-18, A Resolution approving application, administration, and engineering services for water sector program phase 2. He invited Mr. Richard, representative of Domingue, Szabo, & Associates, Inc., to come forward. Mr. Richard came forward and explained the process and responsibility of the applicant for the Water Sector Application. Mayor Watkins asked Mr. Richard to explain the reason for the town making an application to the Water Sector Program and the need to upgrade the oxidation pond. Mr. Richard explained that the cover on the pond has been messed up and, in this condition, it could cause algae and other issues. Mayor Watkins further explained the cover had just been replaced from the damage of the hurricanes then the past storm ripped it apart again. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any questions or comments. No questions or comments were made. It was **moved** by Daniel Hennigan, **seconded** by Joe Becnel to approve Resolution 2024-18. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-18
RESOLUTION APPROVING APPLICATION, ADMINISTRATION, AND
ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR WATER SECTOR PROGRAM PHASE 2

WHEREAS, The Town of Iowa has a need to upgrade the Town of Iowa Wastewater Facilities; and
WHEREAS, the Town of Iowa is in need of assistance with the cost of upgrading and hardening of the Wastewater Facilities; and
WHEREAS, the State of Louisiana, Water Sector Commission has available funds for community sewer systems; and
WHEREAS, The Town of Iowa (“Town”) desires to submit a Water Sector Program Phase 2 application (the “Application”) in the amount up to \$5,806,350.00; and,

WHEREAS, the Town intends to provide up to twenty-five (25%) percent matching funds toward the cost of the project; and

WHEREAS, the Town desires to enter into an agreement with Domingue, Szabo, & Associates, Inc. to perform all administrative consulting services associated with the Application, which includes assistance with developing the Application, and thereafter performing all administrative consulting duties following a grant award.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF IOWA, LOUISIANA:

1. The Town enters into an agreement with Domingue, Szabo, & Associates, Inc to develop and submit the Application, and thereafter to perform all administrative consulting duties following a grant award.
2. The Mayor is authorized to execute respective agreements with Domingue, Szabo, & Associates, Inc, and to execute and submit the Application, as well as all related documents, to be on such other terms and conditions as he shall deem advisable, and to do any and all things necessary and proper to carry out this Resolution and to fulfill its objectives and purposes.
3. This Resolution shall become effective upon final adoption and signature of the Mayor.

Passed, approved, and adopted at a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, on October 14, 2024.

Douglas N Watkins, Mayor

ATTEST:

Cynthia Mallett, Clerk

Mayor Watkins read the second item of the agenda. He announced that this is in conjunction of item #1. Mr. Richard explained the process of applying to D.E.Q. for a loan/grant. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any comments or questions. There were no questions or comments. It was **moved by** Vernessa Guillory, **seconded by** Daniel Hennigan to approve Resolution 2024-19. The motion carried unanimously

RESOLUTION 2024-19

Resolution Approving for the Pre-Application To State of Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality for Wastewater Facility Hardening and Upgrading Project

WHEREAS the Town of Iowa is in need of Wastewater Facility Hardening and Upgrading Project; and,

WHEREAS loans and/or grants for this project may be available through the State Revolving Fund loan program operated by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Town Council of the Town of Iowa, that:

Section 1. The Mayor is hereby authorized to submit a pre-application, application, and issue debt in the amount of \$ 5,806,350.00 to the Department of Environmental Quality on behalf of the Town of Iowa for the purpose of placing this project on the Project Priority List for funding through the State Revolving Fund loan program; and,

Section 2. The Mayor is further authorized to furnish such additional information as may reasonably be requested in connection with the pre-application; and,

Section 3. The Mayor is hereby designated as the Official Project Representative for the Town of Iowa for any project that may result from the submission of the pre-application.

A MOTION TO ADOPT the above resolution was made by Vernessa Guillory, seconded by Daniel Hennigan, and resulted in the following vote:

YEAS: Vernessa Guillory, Daniel Hennigan, Gerald Guidry, and Joe Becnel
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Julie Fontenot
ABSTAINING: None

CERTIFICATE

We the undersigned do certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a meeting held on the 14th day of October 2024, at which meeting a quorum was present and voting.

DOUGLAS N WATKINS, MAYOR

ATTEST:

CYNTHIA MALLETT, TOWN CLERK

Mayor read the third item of the agenda. Hearing of property owners for the condemnation of the below listed properties:

- a. 207 N Welty:
- b. 402 S Philbrick:
- c. 222 Railroad:
- d. 212 S Bowers
- e. 105 Larry

Nobody was present representing the above listed property addresses. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to condemn 207 N. Welty, 402 S Philbrick, 222 Railroad, 212 S. Bowers, and 105 Larry Street. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Watkins invited Mr. Joseph Thibodeaux to come forward. Mr. Thibodeaux came forward and explained his situation and asked about receiving a break in his water bill because he is a disabled veteran. He also talked about his property taxes and asked if he could receive a tax break. Mr. Bouquet said he would have to review his property tax situation before he could answer the question. Mayor Watkins told him to bring in his property tax papers, and it would be reviewed. Mr. Thibodeaux thanked them.

Mayor Watkins announced guest Sheraton McKay. Mr. McKay came forward. He complained about the trash that has been dumped near the oxidation pond. Mayor Watkins addressed the fact that the dumping was by someone else and that they have found out who it is. Mayor Watkins said the town has picked it up and disposed of it. The Mayor explained the vegetation debris was stacked there from the town picking up the branches from the last storm and are now waiting on quotes to have the debris picked up and the site cleaned up. Mr. Sheraton asked about two locations in town that needed grass cutting and/or property

cleanup notifications. There was discussion between Mr. McKay and Mayor Watkins concerning the condition of these properties.

It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Joe Becnel to enter into executive session. The motion carried unanimously. Mayor and Council left meeting room at 7:40pm.

It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to close executive session and return to open meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Meeting resumed at 8:05pm.

Mayor Watkins announced the next item on the agenda was a discussion on the purchase of property located on Railroad Avenue. He said that Ms. Mary Victorian came and asked if the town would be interested in purchasing her property located on Railroad Avenue, approximately 1.27 acres. Mayor Watkins said the property would probably be used for parking. Mr. Austin Sonnier voiced his concern about purchasing property for the park when the budget for the police was decreased. Council Member Dainiel Hennigan said he was opposed to a Taj Mahal Park but, what the park is, and what it could be, is a nice clean good little park for our community. He said that he thought it is a reasonable thing to consider. Other citizens voiced their concerns and opinions about the property being next to the railroad and flooding.

Mayor Watkins read item #8 on the agenda. He explained that the Joint Service Agreement was approved by the Fire Board. He asked if there were any questions. No questions were asked. It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Joe Becnel to enter into Joint Service Agreement with and between Fire District No.1, Ward 8 and Town of Iowa and authorize Mayor Watkins to execute agreement. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read the next item on the agenda and invited Chief Vincent to come forward. Chief Vincent came forward and recommended transferring Beth Roy from Part Time to Full Time Dispatcher effective 10/4/2024. It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to approve transfer of Beth Roy from Part Time to Full Time Dispatcher effective 10/4/2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read the next item on the agenda. Mayor Watkins asked Cindy Mallett to explain this item. Cindy Mallett explained that the Town of Iowa held a credit card account through Capital One and a couple of months ago Capital One closed the account noting that it was because of the town not charging enough. Council Member Daniel Hennigan asked how a credit card would help the town on a day to day operations. Cindy Mallett explained that having a credit card was beneficial to the town because the town would not be limited to where it can purchase items. Mayor Watkins noted that when employees register for conferences and trainings, a credit card is needed. It was **moved by** Vernessa Guillory, **seconded by** Daniel Hennigan to approve application by Mayor Watkins for a Town of Iowa credit card and issue to Department Heads. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read the next item on the agenda. Motion to approve Memorandum of Understanding between McNeese State University and Town of Iowa Police Department and authorize Mayor Watkins to execute said Memorandum. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any questions. Mayor Watkins asked Chief Vincent to explain this memorandum. Chief Vincent explained that off duty officers are asked to help other agencies. It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to approve Memorandum of Understanding between McNeese State University and Town of Iowa Police Department and authorize Mayor Watkins to execute said Memorandum. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read the next item on the agenda and asked if anyone had any questions. Ms. Johnson asked the Mayor to explain this agreement. Mayor Watkins explained that it is a requirement of the LCDBG Clearance grant to test for asbestos and other environmental issues before a building is demolished. It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Joe Becnel to approve agreement with and between Petroleum and Automation Consultants, Inc. and The Town of Iowa for the purpose of required environmental testing

of proposed condemned properties included in LCDBG Clearance Program and authorize Mayor Watkins to execute agreement.

Mayor read next item on the agenda; Introduction of Ordinance 2024-14, An Ordinance amending the FY 2023-2024 budget for the Town of Iowa. Mayor Watkins asked Cindy Mallett to explain. Ms. Mallett explained that near the end of the audit period, the auditors submit a report of amendments needing to be made to the budget based on the correct adjustments made to the separate fund.

Mayor Watkins read the next item on the agenda and asked if there were any questions. No questions were asked. It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Joe Becnel to approve Task Order No. 009 submitted by Bluewing Civil Consulting, LLC for Drainage Improvements Project within Southland Estates Subdivision along Shelby Drive and authorize Mayor Watkins to execute said Task Order. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read the next item on the agenda and asked if anyone had any questions. Council Member Daniel Hennigan questioned the date, December 11, 2023, stated in the attornment agreement. He said he doesn't recall anything occurring on this date with the town council's approval. Mr. Bouquet and Council Member Hennigan discussed the date in question and past actions taken concerning this attornment. It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to table the approval of Attornment Agreement with and between Pro Quarters, LLC and Town of Iowa. The motion carried unanimously. Gabrielle Lowder asked if there were any pertinent changes like selling the property to them. Mr. Bouquet said no. Mayor Watkins said it is the same paperwork as before.

Mayor Watkins asked Cindy Mallett to give the monthly financial report. Cindy Mallett gave the report of finances for the month of September. Ms. Johnson asked for the balance in the general fund checking account. Cindy Mallett reported the general fund checking account balance was \$133,163.02.

With no further business it was **moved by** Joe Becnel, **seconded by** Daniel Hennigan to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 pm.

Douglas N Watkins, Mayor

Cynthia Mallett, MMC

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 November 4, 2024 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 ordinance:

Ordinance 2024-14

An ordinance amending the FY 2023/2024 budget for the Town of Iowa Louisiana

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.
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