

Minutes
Town of Iowa
115 N. Thomson
Iowa, LA
February 14, 2024 At 7:00 p.m.

The Mayor and Town Council met in regular session on this date in compliance with all requirements as to notice.

Mayor Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Douglas N. Watkins; Council members: Gerald Guidry Daniel Hennigan, Joe Becnel, Julie Fontenot, and Vernessa Guillory; Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett; Town Attorney Eugene Bouquet; Chief of Police Keith Vincent; and about 40 citizens.

The invocation was given by Council Member Joe Becnel; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to adopt agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to approve minutes as presented for Regular Meeting, January 15, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins announced that before getting started with the new business he wanted to address a few of concerns. He talked about inflation and the frustration it brings to everyone. He talked about the hard decisions that he and the Council Members must make for the best of Iowa. He talked about going forward and not going backward. He talked about the water rates and that we must start somewhere so we know where we may be able to adjust them if we can. He said that a few people asked to address the Council. He informed everyone that it was a business meeting and asked them to keep it proper.

New Business:

Mayor Watkins read the first item on the agenda; James Freeman, representative of Standard Enterprises, Inc. to present plans for review and approval of SEI Vineyards Development. Mr. Freeman came forward. He introduced himself and briefly told the Council about Standard Enterprises, Inc. and the plans they have to build 71 living units. He said the funds come from CDBG and it will be a rental community. He explained what income levels will be applicable to live there. He explained the process and requirements concerning criminal records and their measures to curve criminal activity. Mr. Kenneth Landry inquired if someone had contacted the Fire Department to see what the support is for the water situation. Mayor Watkins said that there is a set of plans here for their review. Mr. Landry asked about the water pressure in general for the whole town. Mayor Watkins answered his and other questions that a few other citizens had concerning the water and sewer capacity. He said another well is being talked about. He explained plans discussed of how new water and sewer expansions would be funded. Mr. Freeman said that it would be possibly June or July before they would need the services of water and sewer. Council Member Julie Fontenot asked if it would be possible to table it until next month. Council Member Daniel Hennigan said he opposed it. He said the presentation was good but traditionally, that long term it would not be a benefit to the town. He said from a criminal justice perspective it hamstrings us. It was **moved by Joe Becnel, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to table it until next month. The motion passed with the following vote: Yeas: Joe Becnel, Julie Fontenot, Vernessa Guillory, and Gerald Guidry. Nays: Daniel Hennigan. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

Mayor announced guest Kevin Fix. Mr. Fix stated that The Mayor and he had a discussion before the meeting and the mayor addressed some of his concerns. Mr. Fix asked who gives the reports to the

Council to make the decisions they make. Mayor Watkins told him that since he has been in office, it has been himself. Mr. Fix inquired who he should voice his concerns to? Mayor Watkins said he is more than welcome to call him anytime. Mayor Watkins said that the Council Members are available too. Mr. Fix stated that his questions weren't answered. He thanked them for having him. The Council thanked him for coming. Mr. Joshua Macer asked that the information provided tonight, how do they go about getting this information. Mayor Watkins told him that we have some copies here and he has been handing them out to people he sees. Mayor said we will put it on the web site. Mr. Macer reiterated that they just want to know how they arrived at the rates.

Mayor Watkins read item three of the agenda. Guest Mollie Cooks to make inquiries about water and sewer rates. Ms. Cooks came forward and talked about the leak she had in her toilet and how the town workers helped her to detect this leak. She had several questions about how the rates were determined and who set them. She asked how much the town was in the red and how much of the increase do they think it will generate. Mayor said he was not sure where the town will be in three months. He said the best thing is to review it in three months. The sewerage rate was discussed and why it is a higher cost. Mayor explained that the cost is more to treat sewer because it is required to be treated before it goes into the drainage. He talked about the busted sewer lines and clean outs that homeowners have open to drain their yards when there is an influx of rain. She thanked him and he thanked her for coming.

Mr. Eric Johnson, Sr. asked about citizens on fixed incomes and if the Council had a plan of action in the case they are disconnected and can't pay it. Mayor Watkins said that the town had a program and could give folks information about organizations that can assist. Council Member Daniel Hennigan answered that they have been talking about it and they will use common sense in each situation. Mrs. Johnson asked if all the meters are calibrated and that reports are generated giving all flags on the leaks. She asked if there is someone that will contact all the people on the list that have leaks. Mayor Watkins said that Mrs. Roxane will be doing this and if you have any questions call her and if you can't get her then you are welcome to call him.

Mayor Watkins announced Mr. Manela as the next guest on the agenda. Mr. Manela came forward. He voiced his concern about the way the sewer charges are billed. He also talked about the sink holes that need to be addressed. Mayor Watkins said that he will go look at his property tomorrow. Mayor Watkins talked about the possibility of using a percentage for sewer rates, but we won't know until we start. Chief Vincent commented, as a citizen, he agreed with Mr. Manela, He said 20-30% less water doesn't go into the sewer. Mr. Joshua Macer asked what profit margin is acceptable to the town. Mayor said that this is unknown at the time but that we are going in the right direction to correcting our deficit.

Mayor Watkins recognized Mr. Perry. Mr. Perry told of his experience about his neighbor's leaking meter and suggested that maintenance go around and check water meters for leaks.

Mayor Watkins read the fifth item of the agenda. It was **moved by Julie Fontenot, seconded by Joe Becnel** to approve IT maintenance agreement with and between Town of Iowa and Avexon, LLC for City Hall, Police, Fire, and Time Clock System at Water Plant and authorize Mayor Watkins to execute said agreement. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read the sixth item of the agenda. It was **moved by Vernessa Guillory, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to approve Resolution 2024-02, Municipal Water Pollution Prevention Environmental Audit Report. The motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2024-02

Be it Resolved, that the Town of Iowa informs the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality that the following actions were taken by Town Council Members.

1. Resolved the Municipal Water Pollution Prevention Environmental Audit. Report for January 2023-December 2023 which is attached to this resolution.

2. Set for the the following actions necessary to maintain permit requirements contained in the Louisiana Pollution Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) permit, Number L0043605.
 - a. To continue being good environmental stewards by maintaining our waste water 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 12th day of February, Two Thousand and Twenty-four.

Cynthia Mallett, MMC
Town Clerk

Mayor Watkins read the seventh item of the agenda. It was **moved by Vernessa Guillory, seconded by Daniel Hennigan** to approve Calcasieu Parish Coroner 2024 Fee Schedule. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read the eighth item of the agenda. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to introduce Ordinance 2024-03, An Ordinance Annexing approximately 3,150 linear feet of interstate highway 10 and east frontage road into the corporate limits of the town of Iowa, Louisiana. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read the ninth item(a) of the agenda. Upon recommendation of Chief Vincent, it was **moved by Julie Fontenot, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to **approve** promotion of Kristi Juarez from Sargeant to Staff Sargeant effective 1/5/2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read the ninth item (b) of the agenda. Upon recommendation of Chief Vincent, it was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to approve the promotion of Rodney Daigle from Senior Corporal to Detective Sargeant effective 1/25/2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read the ninth item (c) of the agenda. Upon recommendation of Chief Vincent, it was **moved by Julie Fontenot, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to hire Amy Henry for part-time dispatcher effective 1/22/2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read the ninth item (d) of the agenda. Upon recommendation of Chief Vincent, it was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to hire Beth Roy for part-time dispatcher effective 1/25/2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item ten of the agenda. It was **moved by Vernessa Guillory** to approve Resolution 2024-03, A Resolution to declare property as Surplus and Assign to LPS Municipal Surplus Property Program for Online Sale. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 2024-03

A Resolution to Declare Property as Surplus And Assign to
LPS Municipal Surplus Property Program for Online Sale

Council Meeting Date: February 12, 2024

Agenda item: Surplus Property

Presented by: Mayor Watkins

Be It Resolved:

1. The Town of Iowa declares that the following property used by multiple Departments is no longer needed by the town and is declared surplus property and is assigned to LaMATS through the LPS Surplus Property Program, 6767 Perkins Rd., Baton Rouge, LA 70808 to be auctioned online. The listed property

will be viewable and will be auctioned online at www.lamats.net/surplus commencing the day of publication of this resolution for no fewer than 7 days until sold or withdrawn.

Description

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| 1) <u>Non-functional water meters</u> | 9) <u>Camera Monitor W/Wall Bracket</u> |
| 2) <u>7-Lateral file Cabinets</u> | 10) <u>Eureka Vacuum</u> |
| 3) <u>Intercom Office Station</u> | 11) <u>Ice Machine</u> |
| 4) <u>Miscellaneous desk organizers</u> | 12) <u>Epson Printer/Copier/Scanner-WF3720</u> |
| 5) <u>Dell Precision Tower – Model 3420</u> | 13) <u>Home/Office vacuum for electronics</u> |
| 6) <u>Office Chair</u> | 14) <u>Portable desk</u> |
| 7) <u>Curtain rod W/Brackets</u> | 15) <u>Picture w/easel</u> |
| 8) <u>Office Chair</u> | 16) <u>Dell Optiplex 7020 Tower</u> |

2. The Town of Iowa reserves the right to evaluate and to accept the highest bid if deemed to be the fair market value or to relist the unsold item.

Instructions

[Lake Charles American Press, jackie.martz@americanpress.com] and forward to the LPS Municipal Surplus Property Program Administrator, for listing and publication paul@lamats.net.

ATTEST:

Cynthia Mallett, MMC

Mayor Watkins read the eleventh item on the agenda. He stated that before the Council went into action on this item, he said these funds were part of the monies granted to us by the state. It was **moved by Julie Fontenot, seconded by Joe Becnel** to accept the lowest qualified bid for advertised forklift. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read the twelfth item on the agenda; Public Hearing for the listed property owners to show cause why the building/s or structure/s should not be condemned. Mayor Watkins announced the following addresses:

- a. 213 S Welty: The owner/s was not present. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to condemn 213 S Welty Avenue. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. 402 S Philbrick: The owner/s was not present. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to condemn 402 S Philbrick Avenue. The motion passed unanimously.
- c. 701 S Thomson: The owner came forward. She stated that she has 2 estimates and needs about eight weeks to remove it. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Joe Becnel** to grant extension of 60 days for 701 S Thomson. The motion passed unanimously.
- d. 111 S Bowers: The owner/s was not present. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to condemn 111 S Bowers. The motion passed unanimously.
- e. 504-A N Thomson: The owner came forward. She stated that they are in the process of tearing it down and the contractor left a lot of stuff that needs to be cleaned up. She asked for time to complete it. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Gerald Guidry** to grant owners an extension of 30 days to complete clean-up. The motion passed unanimously.

- f. 113 N Welty: The owner/s was not present. It was **moved** by Daniel Hennigan, **seconded** by Julie Fontenot to condemn 113 N Welty. The motion passed unanimously.
- g. 102 S Stockwell: The owner came forward and said that she can't afford to demolish the structure. There was discussion of possibly using the awarded 2023 grant clearance funds to pay for the demolition of this structure. It was **moved** by Daniel Hennigan, **seconded** by Julie Fontenot to condemn 102 S Stockwell. The motion passed unanimously. The owner stated that her house was next to this structure, and she was concerned the structure could fall on the house. She asked if something could be done to push it away from the house until the process of demolition could be done. Mayor Watkins said that a private individual would have to do this for you. The owner said she understood.

Mayor Watkins read item thirteen of the agenda. It was **moved** by Julie Fontenot, **seconded** by Vernessa Guillory to approve Resolution 2024-04, A Resolution accepting the substantial completion of Project No. I-2021-187, FEMA No. 158612, Wastewater Treatment Plant Oxidation Pond Repairs, for the Town of Iowa, LA, and authorizing the advertising of the lien period. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 2024-04

A Resolution accepting the substantial completion of Project No. I-2024-187, FEMA No. 158612, Wastewater Treatment Plant Oxidation Pond Repairs, for the Town of Iowa, LA. And authorizing the advertising of the lien period.

WHEREAS, Spinks Construction, Inc. has substantially completed its contract with the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, for Project No. I-2024-187, FEMA No. 158612, Wastewater Treatment Plant Oxidation Pond Repairs, for the Town of Iowa, LA,

WHEREAS, D. W. Jessen & Associates, LLC has informed the Town Council of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, that Spinks Construction, Inc. has substantially completed its contract and that the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, should accept the said improvements as substantially complete from the said contractor and assume the maintenance of the same;

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL, FOR THE TOWN OF IOWA, LOUISIANA, in regular session convened, that:

SECTION 1: All of the above and foregoing provisions are hereby made a part of this resolutory provision; and the Town Council of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, the governing authority of the said Town, does hereby accept from the said Spinks Construction, Inc. as substantially completed, the heretofore described substantial completion of project No. I-2024-187, FEMA No. 158612, Wastewater Treatment Plant Oxidation Pond Repairs, for the Town of Iowa, LA, SECTION 2; and the Town Council of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, does hereby accept said improvements for maintenance.

SECTION 2: The Town Council fo the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, does hereby authorize the running of a l legal advertisement notifying lien holders affected that the final payment will be made at the end of the lien period of forty-five (45) days.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at Iowa, Louisiana, on this the 12th dday of February, 2024.

DOUGLAS N. WATKINS, MAYOR
TOWN OF IOWA, LOUISIANA

ATTEST:

CYNTHIA MALLETT, MMC
CLERK OF THE TOWN OF IOWA

Mayor Watkins read item fourteen of the agenda; discuss fire station II. He talked about the conversation with FEMA and it seems like there is a better opportunity for the fire station to be on HWY 90. Ms. Pam

Adams asked if this was about fire station I or fire station II. Mayor corrected this and said this was about fire station I. He said there is discussion of FEMA paying to demolish the existing building. He said the town and Fire District could swap the property on HWY 90 for the property on N Thomson.

Town Clerk Cindy Mallett gave the financial report.

Mr. Kenneth Landry voiced his concern and stated the importance of getting the fire station moved away from the railroad.

Mrs. Johnson asked about requesting a copy of ordinances and other paperwork introduced at meetings. Clerk Cindy Mallett told her that she can email or give her copies of anything she wants.

With no further business, it was **moved** by Daniel Hennigan, **seconded** by Joe Becnel to adjourn meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 pm.

ATTEST:

Dougals N. Watkins, Mayor

Cynthia Mallett, 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 March 11, 2024 at seven (7:00) o'clock p.m., at its regular meeting place, 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 2024-03

Ordinance 2024-03, An Ordinance Annexing approximately 3,150 linear feet of interstate highway 10 and east frontage road into the corporate limits of 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. Published in Lake Charles American Press.

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