

Minutes
Public Hearing
115 N. Thomson, Iowa, LA 70647
February 10, 2025
7:00pm

Mayor Watkins opened the Public Hearing at 7:00pm. He announced the Town of Iowa is considering to apply for the Louisiana Community Block Grant FY 2026-2027. He offered copies of the information on the block grant program which explained the categories and the dollar amount of awards for each category. He went over the categories that are available to apply for. He asked if there were any questions or comments. Ms. Ingold asked if there were any plans for low-income housing or affordable housing. Mayor Watkins said no, we have no plans for that. Ms. Leonard asked if there would be displaced people of Iowa or people brought in. Mayor Watkins announced that there are no plans to displace anyone. With no further questions or comments, Mayor Watkins closed the Public Hearing at 7:04pm.

Minutes
Regular Meeting
115 N. Thomson, Iowa, LA 70647
February 10, 2025

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 7:04pm.

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

Others present were Elsie Lane; Town Attorney Eugene Bouquet; Chief of Police Keith Vincent and about 10 people.

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

It was **moved by** Julie Fontenot, **seconded by** Joe Becnel to adopt the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

It was **moved by** Joe Becnel, **seconded by** Julie Fontenot to approve the minutes as presented for regular meeting January 13, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins announced that Ms. Cindy was absent and requested Ms. Elsie Lane report the financials. Ms. Lane reported the town's monthly and year to date financial.

Mayor Watkins made comments on:

- a. The proper proceedings of Mayor and Council meetings, the process of making complaints to your Council Members and Mayor before addressing it at the council meeting. He made suggestions that may help speed decision making and not tabling items brought up at meetings.
- b. He announced that streaming and recording of Mayor and Council Meetings are now live and recorded. He explained the type of camera system installed and the requirements and regulations for the system. He noted that the Town of Iowa is compliant with all requirements.

- c. He gave an update on the January 2025 Winter Freeze and announced a Declaration of Emergency was made for the benefit of protecting the water infrastructure of the town and the public property.
- d. He reported that the town debris issues are mostly repeat offenders. He stated that the town no longer have the service of debris pick up. There have been notices mailed to property owners. He asked the Council to consider going back to the ordinance for these repeat offenders.
- e. He reported that as of present date, there is a decline in revenue. He reported the balances in funds from 2019 and the difference of balance of funds to date. He warned that spending be curbed and suggested to set up some type of savings for emergencies and/or upgrades of equipment.
- f. He talked about the legal process of ordinance enforcement. He explained the process and stated that we have done the process of notice multiple times on the same issue and hope to complete the remaining process soon on some properties.
- g. He reported that the mobile home moved to 608 HWY 90, without a permit, has passed the inspections and is currently permitted. He stated that he is mailing a notice to the moving company, that moved the mobile home, letting them know that they can't do that again without legal issues.
- h. He announced there has been an ongoing issue, for a number of years, with 510 Barkley Street property. He said it goes back to 2022 with abandoned vehicles and drums full of degreasers which had been inspected by DEQ. He reported that there have been medical issues with the owners and now extended family will be helping to resolve the property issues. Mayor Watkins announced that 504 a,b,c,&d Fairview are repeat offenders and that he hopes to remedy this quickly. He said 502 Railroad is related to animal control. He said we have removed 7 dogs and 2 horses from this property.

Mayor Watkins announced guest Ms. Catherine Trahan to come forward. Ms. Trahan came forward. She gave her and her husband's property address and stated that their property abuts and is adjacent to 510 Barkley. She gave a history of the complaints of ordinance violations she has made concerning 510 Barkley Street. She gave descriptions of activity she has observed over the past few years and her concerns. Mayor Watkins thanked Ms. Trahan.

Mayor Watkins announced Chief Vincent to come forward. Chief Vincent came forward.

Upon the request of Chief Vincent it was **moved by** Julie Fontenot, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to approve hiring Brandy Simon for part-time dispatch defective 1/27/2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Upon the request of Chief Vincent it was **moved by** Julie Fontenot, **seconded by** Joe Becnel to approve hiring Noelle Jeannice for part-time dispatch effective 2/3/2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item five of the agenda. It was **moved by** Joe Becnel, **seconded by** Julie Fontenot to approve Open-End (Equity) Lease with Enterprise Fleet Management for the lease of a 2024-Ford F-250 XL 4X2 SD Regular Cab with 8ft utility box for public works department. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item six of the agenda. It was **moved by** Vernessa Guillory, **seconded by** Julie Fontenot to approve Resolution 2025-02. The motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2025-02

**A RESOLUTION RELATIVE TO THE ABANDONING OF A FIVE
FOOT WATER AND SEWERAGE LINE EASEMENT**

WHEREAS, a Right of Way agreement executed on November 30, 1982, by and between Philip W. and Druis Marlene Miller and Town of Iowa, created a five (5) foot wide easement for the constructing and maintaining of water and sewerage lines on the property for the benefit of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, described as follows:

Five (5) feet along West side of property described as: Commencing at SE corner 19.9.6 thence N 40 feet, thence W along N R/W line Hwy 27, 225 Ft. to point of beginning, thence West 100 feet, N 285 Ft. E 100 Ft., S 285 Ft. to Point of beginning; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Iowa has not utilized, and does not foresee any future benefit to the Town of Iowa, of the above-described easement; and

WHEREAS, Waffle House, Inc. the new owners of the above described property, has submitted a formal request to the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Iowa for the abandonment of the five (5) foot water and sewerage line easement for public water and sewerage lines;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Town Council Members for the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, that the above stated Right of Way Agreement be terminated and the described easement be abandoned.

The following Council Members voted:

YEAS: Vernessa Guillory, Julie Fontenot, Gerald Guidry, and Joe Becnel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Daniel Hennigan

ABSTAIN:None

WHEREAS, this resolution was declared passed on this the 10th day of February, 2025.

APPROVED:

Douglas N Watkins, Mayor

ATTEST:

Cynthia Mallett, Municipal Clerk

With no further business to discuss, it was **moved by** Julie Fontenot, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm.

Douglas N Watkins, Mayor

Cynthia Mallett, MMC