

Minutes
Town of Iowa
115 N. Thomson, Iowa, LA
April 10, 2023 7:00 p.m.

The Mayor 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 7:00 pm.

Present: Mayor Douglas Neal Watkins; Council Members: Gerald Guidry, Vernessa Guillory, Joe Becnel, and Julie Fontenot; Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett; Town Attorney Eugene Bouquet; and about 7 citizens.
Absent: Council Member Daniel Hennigan,

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

It was **moved by** Joe Becnel, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to adopt agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

It was **moved by** Vernessa Guillory, **seconded by** Joe Becnel to approve minutes as presented for Regular Meeting March 13, 2023. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read the following statement:

Regarding the recent events in Nashville, I would like to address a few things at this time. I have had a few folks reach out to me with concern about our local schools and rightly so. Directly related to this, I feel it is imperative that this information be stated for the record for those that can't attend the meetings and rely on being able to read the minutes of the meeting.

First of all, in the event of any type of situation in our town that involves an active shooter, our police and Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's Department officers will respond. As our police will most likely be the first on scene our Chief will make assessments and respond accordingly. There have been some concerns that our local police do not have the "long guns" required for such an event. Rest assured that when it comes to any type of long guns, officers that have been trained have the weapons needed for such an event. I trust that you will agree with me that only those trained need the access to type of weapons. I think it imperative that we are very careful and responsible when it comes to these matters that we reserve our comments or concerns regarding training, weapons, or any other matter regarding law enforcement directly to Chief Vincent who is the duly elected Chief. By suggesting an issue with anyone other than Chief Vincent regarding these matters is in my opinion irresponsible.

Directing our attention to the Budget. My office is in the process of reviewing and having meetings regarding the upcoming budget for the 23-24 year. Over the past couple of months the revenue from the collection of taxes has decreased as a direct result of Inflation as we all have probably cut back on our spending. Looking over the trends and numbers it appears that the upcoming budget will look more like the budget of 2021. This will affect all budgets including the Police Department. We are having to make significant changes to make sure that tax payer dollars as spent properly.

Regarding tax payer monies, the Buddy Ball field is now complete and we must turn our attention to infrastructure needs. Any capital outlay needs should and have to be directed to water, sewer, streets and drainage. If we have any funds left over from last years budget these funds should be directed to these areas.

Regarding the park, we do have some repairs that need to be made and in a timely fashion, any new improvements need to be pushed to the future until such a time as funding can be obtained.

Mayor Watkins asked if anyone had any questions. No comments were made.

Mayor Watkins read the item for Old Business and asked if anyone had any questions or concerns. Council Member Joe Becnel asked if all the meters were in. Mayor said within the next couple of weeks they should be completed. A citizen asked for a copy of the rates. Cindy Mallett said we would also post it on the website. Julie Fontenot asked about the low consumption rate for accounts. There was discussion of how this would be monitored. It was **moved by** Joe Becnel, **seconded by** Julie Fontenot to approve Resolution 2023-08. The motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2023-08

A Resolution setting Utility Rates, Tap Fees, Charges for Other Services, and Account Fees EFFECTIVE MAY 1, 2023

WHEREAS, The Town of Iowa has a legal and fiduciary duty to increase or decrease water and sewer rates as necessary for the service of providing water and sewer; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Iowa has had considerable financial losses during the past 18 months to produce water and process sewer; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Iowa needs to increase and make changes to the non-residential customers: and

WHEREAS, The Town of Iowa has installed residential water meters servicing the residents of the Town and needs to set meter rates for the newly installed residential water meters.

THEREFORE, the Town of Iowa establishes the following commercial rates for water and commercial rates for sewer to become effective for May 2023 billing cycle.

COMMERICAL RATES:

- In Town Water: \$34.00 for first 2000 gallons
 \$ 3.75 per 1000 gallons after the first 2000 gallons

- Out of Town Water: \$39.00 for first 2000 gallons
 \$ 3.75 per 1000 gallons after the first 2000 gallons

- In Town Sewer: \$ 37.00 for first 2000 gallons
 \$ 3.75 per 1000 gallons after the first 2000 gallons

- Out of Town Sewer: \$42.00 for first 2000 gallons
 \$ 3.75 per 1000 gallons after the first 2000 gallons

FURTHER, THEREFORE, the Town of Iowa establishes the following residential rates for water and sewer to become effective for May 2023 billing cycle.

RESIDENTIAL RATES:

- In Town Water: \$22.00 for first 2000 gallons
 \$ 3.75 per 1000 gallons after the first 2000 gallons

- Out of Town Water: \$27.00 for first 2000 gallons
 \$ 3.75 per 1000 gallons after the first 2000 gallons

- In Town Sewer: \$29.00 for first 2000 gallons

\$3.75 per 1000 gallons after the first 2000 gallons

Out of Town Sewer: \$34.00 for first 2000 gallons
\$3.75 per 1000 gallons after the first 2000 gallons

WHEREFORE, considering small commercial businesses, social organizations, and low consumption residents, using a six-month average to be monitored regularly, the Town of Iowa establishes the following rates for water and sewer to become effective for May 2023 billing cycle:

In Town Water: \$15.00 (flat) for 1,000 gallons or less
\$22.00 (flat) for 1,001 – 2,000 gallons

In Town Sewer: \$20.00 (flat) for 1,000 gallons or less
\$29.00 (flat) for 1,001 – 2,000 gallons

Out of Town Water: \$20.00 (flat) for 1,000 gallons or less
\$27.00 (flat) for 1,001- 2,000 gallons

Out of Town Sewer: \$25.00 (flat) for 1,000 gallons or less
\$34.00 (flat) for 1,001 – 2,000 gallons

FURTHER, WHEREFORE The Town of Iowa hereby establishes the following bulk water purchase rate, Tap Fees, Deposits, and other services as follows:

BULK WATER RATE: \$10.00 per 1,000 gallons

WATER TAP FEES: \$ 815.00 for ¾ inch water tap
\$2,910.00 for 2-inch water tap

Greater than two (2) inches shall be based on the actual cost basis.

Cost to locate existing water tap on Town Right-of-way shall be \$50.00

SEWER TAP FEES: \$550.00 up to four (4) inches

Greater than four(4) inches and any tap over fifty (50) feet in length and all other taps not listed above, shall be billed at cost including but not limited to labor and materials with a copy of said cost to be furnished to user.

Cost to locate existing sewer tap on Town Right -of-way shall be \$50.00

DEPOSITS:

Residential shall pay \$150.00 for a deposit before services will be turned on.

Commercial shall pay \$200.00 for a deposit before services will be turned on.

OTHER SERVICES: Location of water or sewer lines on private property with Right of Entry or Affidavit shall be \$100.00. Other services on private property shall be billed on a cost recovery basis. Acceptance and scheduling of the above services shall be at the discretion of the lead supervisor and shall be scheduled based on his department workload.

Schedule of Other fees and charges:

Delinquent Account Service Fee	\$25.00
NSF/Return Payment/EFT Fee	\$25.00
Meter Profile Request	\$25.00

Damaged/Missing Lock, Valve or Fittings....	\$75.00
Removal of Water Meter	\$15.00
Damage to Water Meter	\$250.00 ¼ inch meter
	\$375.00 1 inch meter
	\$3500.00 2 inch meter
	\$3910.00 4 inch meter
Damage/Missing Water Meter Lid	\$24.00

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Town Council Members for the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, in regular session this date does hereby set the above listed utility rates, services, and account fees. The following Council Members voted:

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Daniel Hennigan

ABSTAIN: None

WHEREAS, this resolution was declared adopted on this the 10th day of April, 2023.

APPROVED:

Douglas N. Watkins, Mayor

ATTEST:

Cynthia Mallett, Municipal Clerk

New Business:

Mayor read the first item; Motion to Adopt the millage rate(s), Resolution 2023-09. Mayor Watkins asked if anyone had any questions or concerns. He said it was a renewal. It was not a new tax. It was **moved by** Julie Fontenot, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to approve the following resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2023-09

BE IT RESOLVED, that the following millage(s) are hereby levied on the 2023 tax roll on all property subject to taxation by Town of Iowa:

(Name of taxing district)

MILLAGE

General Alimony

(Tax for: e.g. General Alimony, Library, Maintenance)

5.590 mills

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the proper administrative officials of the Parish of Calcasieu, State of Louisiana, be and they are hereby empowered, authorized, and directed to

spread said taxes, as hereinabove set forth, upon the assessment roll of said Parish for the year 2023, and to make the collection of the taxes imposed for and on behalf of the taxing authority, according to law, and that the taxes herein levied shall become a permanent lien and privilege on all property subject to taxation as herein set forth, and collection thereof shall be enforceable in the manner provided by law.

The foregoing resolution was read in full; the roll was called on the adoption thereof, and the resolution was adopted by the following votes:

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

NAYS: None

ABSTAINED: None

ABSENT: Daniel Hennigan

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of the resolution adopted at the board meeting held on April 10, 2023, at which meeting a quorum was present and voting.

Iowa, Louisiana, this 10th day of April, 2023.

(City, Town, Village)

(Signature of authorized person of the taxing district)

Mayor Watkins read the second item of New Business. He introduced Alex Guillory representing Bluewing Civil Engineering, LLC. Mr. Guillory came forward and gave an overview of what he does and his background. Mayor asked if anyone had any questions for Mr. Alex. Nobody had any questions for Mr. Alex. Council Member Julie Fontenot asked about having more than one engineer. Mayor Watkins explained he would like to have about three, if possible, that was experienced in different areas. Cindy Mallett explained that a master agreement with Fenstermaker was approved a few months ago and this is similar. She said Mr. Bouquet reviewed it. Mr. Bouquet said it was not an exclusive agreement. It was **moved by** Julie Fontenot, **seconded by** Joe Becnel to approve Short Form of Agreement Between Town of Iowa an Bluewing Civil Consulting, LLC for Civil Engineering and Consulting Services Master Services Agreement (MSA). The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item three of New Business. It was **moved by** Julie Fontenot, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to approve Resolution 2023-10. The motion carried unanimously. The following resolution was offered by Julie Fontenot, seconded by Vernessa Guillory and duly resolved:

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-10
A RESOLUTION REQUESTING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
UNDER ROUND 2 OF THE WATERSHED INITIATIVE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the State of Louisiana launched the Louisiana Watershed Initiative, introducing a new watershed-based approach to reducing flood risk in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the State of Louisiana is now accepting round 2 applications for \$100 million project funding opportunity for local and regional public entities; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Iowa meets the criteria of low-to moderate-income level and is located within the parishes most impacted and distressed by the 2016 floods; and

WHEREAS, it is deemed necessary and proper to submit application for a flood risk reduction project with the State of Louisiana Watershed Initiative Program.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Iowa that Mayor Douglas Watkins is hereby authorized to sign and submit an application to the Watershed Initiative and also execute any and all documents should this grant be funded; and

THEREUPON, the above resolution was declared adopted.

CERTIFICATE

I, Cynthia Mallett, MMC, Town Clerk of the Town of Iowa, do hereby certify that the above is a true and exact copy of a resolution adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Iowa on April 10, 2023 at which time a quorum was present and voting.

CYNTHIA MALLETT, MMC
TOWN CLERK
TOWN OF IOWA

Mayor Watkins Read item four of New Business and announced the need to amend the application for LGAP 2021-2022. Cindy Mallett listed the items the original grant was applied for. Mayor said he would rather use the grant to pay the fees and purchase the items needed to do GIS mapping for the Town of Iowa.

Mayor Watkins read item five and item six and said these proclamations will be posted. Proclamation of Fair Housing Month April, 2023 and Proclamation for Community Development Block Grant Program.

Council Member Julie Fontenot asked a person present, representing Fensermaker about a project that had been previously discussed for an evacuation route for the town. There was discussion about a grant that would help fund this project. Mayor Watkins asked Mr. Gerald Guidry about the past discussions brought before the Council about building a bridge for the purpose of an evacuation route. There was further discussion about how this could be accomplished and the issues that they would have with property owners.

With no further business it was **moved by** Vernessa Guillory, **seconded by** Gerald Guidry to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned 7:45pm.

ATTEST:

Neal Watkins, Mayor

Cynthia Mallett, MMC

