

**Minutes
Special Meeting
115 N. Thomson, Iowa, LA 70647
December 22, 2025**

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

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

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

Also, present was Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett; Town Attorney Russell Stutes III; Chief of Police Keith Vincent and about 4 people.

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

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

Mayor Watkins announced the first item on the agenda. Comments by Town Attorney Russ Stutes. Mr. Stutes spoke about the function of the Council and the function of the Town Attorney. He reported that he met with the Mayor and the Chief of Police separately. He discussed the CEA between CPSB and Town of Iowa to provide a school resource officer for Iowa Middle School and JI Watson Elementary School. He gave information on the Mayor's authority to sign or not sign an agreement or contract, the authority of the Council to override the Veto of the Mayor.

Mayor Watkins gave two reasons for not signing the CEA between CPSB and Town of Iowa to provide a school resource officer for Iowa Middle School and JI Watson Elementary School. He said the first reason is to establish a viable conversation about controlling expenditures and the budget. The second reason is to somewhat protect the Governing Authority, the Council, in their ability to operate in their confines with the budget act. He asked if there were any questions. Council Member Daniel Hennigan stated that he was frustrated because he had requested that there be a discussion at the special meeting on the budget and then it doesn't happen. Council Member Julie Fontenot discussed the agreement that the School Board will be paying 83% of the cost and the town paying 17% of the cost for the School Resource Officer. She asked if this would help the police budget. Chief Vincent responded with his opinion on the agreement as being a positive thing for his department and how he uses the officer when he is not doing his school duties. Council Member Daniel Hennigan asked Chief Vincent questions of how long he had conversations with the school principal about this agreement. Chief Vincent said over a year. He asked Chief Vincent other questions about the conversations he had with Principal Deitz. Chief Vincent answered the questions Mr. Hennigan asked him. Council Member Gerald Guidry asked Chief Vincent questions concerning the Sheriff Department providing an officer. Chief Vincent responded with an explanation "not in a municipality", he continued when the sheriff department is short of deputies they are using a contract company. Mr. Guidry asked if he puts these two officers in the school, are you going to hire two more officers? He responded, "I'm 3 or 4 more short, yes". Mr. Guidry asked how many officers he had now. Council Member Daniel Hennigan responded with the number of officers and dispatchers the police department employed. Mayor asked if there were any questions. Mr. Erik Johnson stated that there is training for School Resource Officers in the summer and the

requirements of training needed for a School Resource Officer. There was continued discussion on training of officers.

Mayor Watkins explained that he does not want to do away with the CEA, he just wants to put a hold on it until the budget can be addressed. There was discussion to sign the CEA tonight.

Town Attorney Russ Stutes announced that the Council can say what they would like done today. They can table it until January or amend the agenda to approve the CEA. Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett asked if action could be taken on an amended item on the agenda. Mayor Watkins said it isn't an action item. Council Member Daniel Hennigan announced frustration at the process he went through to call a special meeting and then not being able to do anything. Attorney Stutes said that he thought they were close enough on the agenda item to amend it and add a particular vote, if that's what the council wants to do.

It was **moved** by Daniel Hennigan, **seconded** by Julie Fontenot to amend the agenda to add a vote to enter into the previously discussed CEA between Calcasieu Parish School Board and Town of Iowa to provide a school resource officer for Iowa Middle School and JI Watson Elementary School. The motion passed unanimously.

It was **moved** by Daniel Hennigan, **seconded** by Julie Fontenot to enter into the previously discussed CEA between Calcasieu Parish School Board and Town of Iowa to provide a school resource officer for Iowa Middle School and JI Watson Elementary School. The motion passed unanimously.

With no further business to discuss, it was **moved** by Daniel Hennigan, **seconded** by Vernessa Guillory, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35pm.

Douglas N Watkins, Mayor

Attest:

Cynthia Mallett MMC, Town Clerk