

Minutes
Town of Iowa
115 N. Thomson, Iowa, LA
September 25, 2023 at 7:00pm

The Mayor and Town Council met in special session on 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, Daniel Hennigan, and Julie Fontenot; Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett; Town Attorney Eugene Bouquet; Police Chief Keith Vincent; and 4 citizens.

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

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

Mayor Watkins read the first item on the agenda, hearing from Mr. Jerome Seaberry II on the condemnation of the structure located at 111 S Bowers Avenue, Iowa, LA 70647 and asked if Mr. Seaberry was present. Mr. Seaberry was not present. Cindy Mallett said that she had communication with Mr. Seaberry, and reported he said that he would be here. She said that she sent a notice for him to appear for this hearing by regular mail. Mr. Bouquet advised sending a certified notice to him to appear at a future date. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Joe Becnel** to send a certified notice to Mr. Jerome Seaberry II to appear for a hearing on condemnation of 111 S Bowers Avenue. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins said that the second item on the agenda, Hearing from Ms. Vernessa Guillory on the condemnation for the structure located at 111 S Bowers Avenue, Iowa, LA 70647, is going to be void because the part of the trailer owned by Mr. Seaberry is sitting on this property. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Joe Becnel** to reset the hearing for the same time as Mr. Seaberry's hearing. The motion passed with the vote as follows: YEAS: Daniel Hennigan, Joe Becnel, Julie Fontenot, and Gerald Guidry NAYS: None ABSENT: None ABSTAIN: Vernessa Guillory

Mayor Watkins asked if there was anyone present representing the property located at 110 S Bowers Avenue. Mr. Lee Anderson stated that he was not opposing the condemnation. Mayor Watkins asked what amount of time it would take him to begin demolishing the building. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Joe Becnel** to condemn structure at 110 S Bowers and grant 45 days to Mr. Anderson to begin demolition. The motion passed with the vote as follows: YEAS: Daniel Hennigan, Joe Becnel, Julie Fontenot, and Gerald Guidry NAYS: None ABSENT: None ABSTAIN: Vernessa Guillory

Mayor Watkins said the next one is Mr. Nelson Miller at 500 and 502 Railroad Avenue. Mayor said Mr. Miller is not here but said Mr. Miller was all good with the condemnation. Mr. Bouquet asked if we had proper service. Cindy Mallett said yes. Mayor Watkins said Mr. Miller does not object. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to condemn structures at 500 and 502 Railroad Avenue and grant 45 days to begin Demolition. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins announced the next property on the list was Ms. Mary Victorian for structure located at 216 and 218 N Railroad Avenue. Ms. Mary was present and asked how long they would grant her to take it down. She had no objections to the condemnation. Mayor Watkins said if she has any problems with the 45 days to begin then come back and request more time. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to condemn structure at 216 and 218 N Railroad Avenue, Iowa, LA and to grant 45 days to begin demolition. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item six on the agenda and asked for any discussion. There were discussions about the Lawrason Act providing for the process of raising salaries for elected officials and it shouldn't be by COLA as it is for employees. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Joe Becnel** to introduce Ordinance 2023-04, An Ordinance rescinding Ordinance 2014-03, An ordinance amending Chapter 2, Administration, of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Iowa Louisiana; Providing for the fixing of the salary of elected officials. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item seven of the agenda. Council Member Julie Fontenot had comments and questions about the raise of the Chief of Police, Town Clerk and employees. It was explained that since we were not doing a COLA raise, funds were set for employees' raises by way of the introduction of Ordinance 2023-07. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to introduce Ordinance 2023-05, An Ordinance Providing for the fixing of the salary of Chief of Police. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item eight of the agenda. It was **moved by Vernessa Guillory, seconded by Daniel Hennigan** to introduce Ordinance 2023-06, An Ordinance Providing for the fixing of the salary of the Clerk. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor read item nine of the agenda. He asked Cindy Mallett to explain. Cindy explained the need to amend the budget to provide for a 3% raise to employees and that this included the benefits that affected the increase in wages. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to introduce Ordinance 2023-07, An Ordinance Amending the FY 2023-2024 Budget for the Town of Iowa Louisiana. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor read item ten of the agenda. Cindy Mallett explained that this ordinance amends last fiscal year's budget based on the outcome of the audit. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to introduce Ordinance 2023-08, An Ordinance Amending the FY 2022-2023 Budget for the Town of Iowa Louisiana. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor read item eleven of the agenda. He explained that one police unit was not equipped with cameras and recorders. Council Member Daniel Hennigan and Mayor Watkins asked about the cost and budget expenditure of this addition. Cindy Mallett said that it wasn't included in the budget and we don't know how it will affect it. It may be ok, if not it can be amended. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory**. The motion passed unanimously.

with no further business it was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Joe Becnel** to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 pm.

ATTEST:

Neal 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 October 9, 2023 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 ordinances:

Ordinance 2023-04

An Ordinance rescinding Ordinance 2014-03, An ordinance amending Chapter 2, Administration, of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana: Providing for the fixing of the salary of elected officials.

Ordinance 2023-05

An Ordinance Providing for the fixing of the salary of Chief of Police

Ordinance 2023-06

An Ordinance Providing for the fixing of the salary of the Clerk

Ordinance 2023-07

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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