

Minutes
Special Meeting
Town of Iowa
115 N. Thomson
Iowa, LA 70647

August 20, 2024 at 7:00p.m.

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 p.m.

Mayor Watkins called roll. 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 16 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; It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to enter executive session to discuss mediation results of lawsuit between Town of Iowa and Pro Quarters, LLC. The motion passed unanimously. The Council, Mayor, Attorney Eugene Bouquet, Attorney Mark Owens, and Town Clerk Cindy Mallett left the meeting room for executive session at 7:03 pm.

The Council, Mayor, Attorney Eugene Bouquet, Attorney Mark Owens, and Town Clerk Cindy Mallett returned to the meeting room. Mr. Eugene Bouquet explained the purpose of the executive session. It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Julie Fontenot to close executive session and return to open meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Open meeting resumed at 8:13pm.

Mayor Watkins read item three of the agenda. It was **moved by** Joe Becnel, **seconded by** Julie Fontenot to accept proposed settlement offer from the mediation outcome. The vote was as follows: YEAS: Joe Becnel, Julie Fontenot, Gerald Guidry, and Vernessa Guillory NAYS: Daniel Hennigan Abstain: None Absent: None. The motion passed.

Mayor Watkins asked Mr. Mark Owens and Mr. Tom Gayle to come forward to explain the mediation process concerning Pro Quarters, LLC. Mr. Owens began explaining the mediation that took place between Pro Quarters, LLC and Town of Iowa. Mr. Gayle explained that a compromise was made with the end result being that Pro Quarters would pay the Town of Iowa five thousand dollars per month with the agreement to purchase the land within ten years. If the purchase is made within five years, the amount paid is credited to the purchase price. If the purchase is within years six to ten the amount paid is not credited to the purchase price. Mr. Owens said that this will end the litigation. Council Member Julie Fontenot asked when would the amendment to the lease for the property be made, where the town could control what businesses, they could put on the property. Mr. Owens said that is something that he and Mr. Gayle will discuss when they leave the meeting; one is the appraisal of the property then he answered her question. He explained that the lease would be amended so that it wouldn't allow just any kind of business, but it would not be so broad or too narrow. Council Member Julie Fontenot asked if a motion needed to be made to amend the lease. Mr. Gayle said that they would work together on it and make sure that it stipulates certain things and that it makes sense on both sides. Mayor thanked both attorneys.

Mayor Watkins read item four of the agenda. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any questions or comments. Mayor Watkins explained that 502 Railroad Avenue has not had a succession and has multiple heirs and to be able to move forward on the demolition it is necessary to hire a curator to represent the heirs. Mr. Bouquet explained that the purpose is to meet the requirements of notice. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to approve appointment of Curator to represent owners of 502 Railroad Avenue for the purpose of demolition of structure. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item five on the agenda. Mayor Watkins asked Mr. Barlow representative of Avexon, to come forward and explain difference of internet services; wireless, fiber optic, or other wired connection, and his experience with each one. Mr. Barlow came forward and in gave his opinion and experience of these types of service. Chief Vincent came forward and addressed the Mayor and Council Members concerning the current internet service for the police department and his wishes to stay with the current company, FulAir. There were questions asked and discussions held. Chief Vincent reported that he was unable to receive a quote from FulAir as of the night of the meeting, but they were working on it. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to approve service Agreement and Property Access Agreement with Optimum Business as for City Hall 115 N Thomson Avenue and authorize Mayor Watkins to execute agreements and to allow Police Department to maintain FulAir Service for \$750.00 or less with 500mb. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item six of the agenda. He explained he has been working on this for some time and would like to see live streaming for the meetings. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any questions. No questions or comments were made concerning this agenda item. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Joe Becnel** to approve live streaming of Mayor and Council Meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item seven of the agenda. He explained the difference between the two options that were provided. After Mayor Watkins explained the difference between the options, Council Member Daniel Hennigan stated that even though Option B is an additional five or six hundred it seems like a little better deal for what people will be getting from it. Ms. Pam Adams asked if we would have to hire someone to operate it. Mayor Watkins explained that the operation of the cameras would be simple, and Ms. Cindy could do it. Council Member Julie Fontenot asked if this was a one-time fee. Mayor Watkins said yes unless we have problems with the system. Mr. Eric Johnson asked if this was the same company that had cameras around the building. Mayor Watkins said no this is an audio company for set ups like this. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Joe Becnel** to accept quote B from Heritage Audio for purchase and installation of cameras in City Hall Meeting Room. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Watkins announced that Mr. Barlow Brown was present to discuss Camera Relocation Refresh. Mr. Brown came forward and introduced himself and gave his credentials. He said he was there when they were installing the Fortinet equipment and looked at the current camera installation and noticed that there were some cameras not working and was installed with a lower standard. He gave details of what he saw that could have been better and he gave details of the footprint of the current installation. He explained the opportunities the town could improve and maximize public safety. Mayor Watkins clarified that these cameras are for the park. He said it doesn't have anything to do with the police department. He said he wanted to make that distinction. He said there needs to be some visuals on the back baseball fields. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any questions. Chief Vincent came forward and said that he thinks that these are great improvements. He said he had a couple of questions; one was what part of the budget these improvements are coming out of, also, in the document they talked about water tower enhancement. Chief Vincent said that's not in the park. Council Member Daniel Hennigan explained that water tower enhancement was an option for down the road. Chief Vincent asked about the LPR's. Council Member Daniel Hennigan said that is also in the options. Chief Vincent said that the town already had some LPR's and asked to be included in the meeting if we put additional LPR's. Mayor Watkins confirmed that Chief

Vincent will be included in the discussion. Mayor Watkins thanked Mr. Brown for his work in bringing this to them.

With no further business, it was moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

ATTEST:

Dougals N. Watkins, Mayor

Cynthia Mallett, Town Clerk