

Town of Iowa

Neal Watkins
Mayor

Cynthia Mallett
Clerk

Eugene Bouquet
City Attorney

P.O. Box 1707
Iowa, La. 70647
Ph#337-582-3535/Fax#337-582-7776



Council Members

Julie Fontenot
Joe Becnel
Vernessa Guillory
Daniel Hennigan
Gerald Guidry

Monthly Mayors Report

January 12,2023

I trust that the residents of Iowa had a wonderful Christmas and are hopeful of the upcoming year. As part of my commitment to the town, I will be issuing a monthly mayors report. This report is designed to help keep our community informed. This report will be a work in progress as the format may change to better present the information properly.

The Ugly

Technology is a great thing; helping to keep us connected in so many ways. However as many of you have experienced, over the last few weeks when a cell tower is down it creates difficulties that cause each of us to deal with situations outside our “normal” habits. The town of Iowa is not immune from these issues as is evident by items that have been put in place to help both the residents and town employees to be alerted to issues that affect us all. Recently we have had what can be classified as a “Perfect Storm”.

1. **BOIL ADVISORY-** As SOME of you know there was a boil advisory issued on Saturday January 7, 2023. Fact one: With cell service down communication to our “mission control” did not perform as was intended nor designed regarding levels in the water tower. Fact two: Daily readings are part of the daily work requirements for town employees. Fact three: Gauges and readings were within acceptable levels around noon. Fact four: Early afternoon low pressure and phone calls alerted us to the seriousness of an unknown situation. Fact five: Electrical issues placed one well out of service as well as presenting an additional issue with another well, which compounded the issue. Based on our guidelines Boil Advisory was issued. Fact six: Code Red was implemented to send out alerts, including reporting to KPLC and posting on website/social media. **REMEDY:** Relay with a strobe/colored light installed at location of our main gauge. This relay will be based on the common denominator that will trigger when the signal to mission control is lost based on the static condition. Remedy will not be dependent on cell tower being in service.
2. **CODE RED-** On Monday we discovered that Code Red is not working properly. Many that had signed up did not receive information regarding Boil Advisory. This is a code red issue with their

system/lack of data. **REMEDY:** Work has started rectifying the system/lack of data. Other changes are being reviewed as a possible replacement.

THE BAD

Debris pick up has been an issue and as we are all too aware, some items sit beside the roadways for extended periods of time. At this time the town does NOT have a specific program for picking up debris. Not to overstate the obvious but there are many factors that contribute to this issue. Waste Management only handles the household garbage pick up and it has to be placed in the appropriate container. Currently we have to contract out this service, and of course the pricing is according to the tonnage which is brought to the landfill. The cost of this is expensive and as of this report funding for this is not being recovered and creating a loss which is reflected in our yearly budget. **REMEDY:** We are currently looking into a service for the debris pick up. This remedy will be a scheduled process with dates posted for both times to set to the curb and last day for pick up. This information will be added to the website and available at town hall in print form. We hope that this service can be implemented by mid-March. In the interim we are subject to a third-party schedule, and as such a schedule is not available.

I am asking for residents, for the time being if you have debris, and have a way to haul it to the landfill to please do so. If you do not have a way if you could refrain during the month of February this would help us to reduce the costs allowing for funds to be spent appropriately.

The Good

PARKS: We continue to make progress in the park regarding the buddy ball field and the contractor seems to be on track regarding the contract completion date. Phase 2 of the construction is expected to begin at the conclusion of the ball season in late summer.

RABBIT FESTIVAL: Discussions have been had with the *Rabbit Festival Board* in principle those discussions are for a return to the town of Iowa, however the time frame for the return is dependent on several logistical issues. Additional discussions are possible after March of this year.

FARMERS MARKET: Discussions have begun regarding Farmers Market/ Trade days, more details will be available in the next issue of this report.

UTILITIES: Sewage, Streets, and Water departments are working on a structured plan that will be worked in a quadrant-by-quadrant process. This will allow the town to be more efficient with labor and to help stretch monies available to make improvements and repairs. By all means if you have a situation that you deem urgently requires attention, please make that phone call. We are working on a comprehensive plan to systematically address the drainage; this will include working with the drainage board and the parish- this will take time but will be updated. Again, this will be done quadrant by quadrant. We are asking for 6-8 weeks to thoroughly develop this plan, and your patience with us is appreciated. Water meters are taking a priority, and we hope to have all meters installed by the end of March if not sooner. We have implemented a process that disturbed ground, after installation when ground is dry, will be dressed and seeded.

ADMINISTRATION

I wish to take a moment and thank the residents of Iowa, as I know each of you understand that change is inevitable in all our lives. We will experience growing pains as we move forward together, and I look forward to the interactions with you as we work through concerns, complaints, ideas, and solutions. I am proud of the town of Iowa and all of my decisions will be based on what is best for the town.

I would like to give a shout out to our Police department and Chief Vincent for helping us address an issue that could have impacted a water main and left some residents with an interruption of water supply.

After just 7 working days on the job, I am confident in saying that the ladies in town hall are exceptional in their positions. They take pride in their work, their ability to work as a team is simply amazing. A personal thanks to the Town Hall employees! Our maintenance/parks department with its desire to do things the proper way is encouraging to see. The level of knowledge, as well as pride is evident in the daily tasks that have been done the past 9 days especially with the unexpected "perfect storm" issue.

In conclusion, as always will be the case, your concerns are my concerns and I am available for conversations. With me being involved with the everyday business, I do ask that if you need to speak or meet with me that you call the office. If I am not available at that moment, please leave a message for me. I will either return the call or set a time to meet with you. It is my desire that over the next 6-8 weeks that we will find our rhythm as we take on 2023.

At this time this will be the only "mail out" by the town for this report. In an effort to keep the cost down all future reports will be posted on the towns website and will be available at town hall in print form. This report will fall on the second Friday of each month.

Hope to see you around town soon!

Mayor Watkins