

**Minutes**  
**Public Hearing Meeting**  
**Town of Iowa**  
**115 N. Thomson**  
**May 20, 2024**  
**Iowa, La**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Mayor Douglas Watkins called a public hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. Present was Mayor Watkins; Council Members Julie Fontenot, Daniel Hennigan, Gerald Guidry, and Vernessa Guillory; Town Attorney Eugene Bouquet; Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett; Chief of Police Keith Vincent; and about 21 citizens.

Mayor read the following:

1. Obtain views on introduced Ordinance 2024-07, An Ordinance Amending the FY 2023-2024 Budget for the Town of Iowa Louisiana. Mayor Watkins asked Town Clerk, Cindy Mallett to explain what the amendments are so everyone would understand. Cindy Mallett explained the proposed amendments and why it was needed. Mayor Watkins asked if anyone had any questions or comments. Ms. Johnston asked for clarification of the title of funds and the purpose of the expenditures. Cindy Mallett answered her questions. Mr. Macer asked what the \$300,000.00 grant award was for. Mayor Watkins explained that the purpose of the grant was for equipment. Two other citizens asked for clarification of the title of Sales Tax I and Water Fund and the uses of the funds. Mayor Watkins explained that Sales Tax I is titled as Water Improvements from when it was initiated but the fund can be used for a variety of things, and the Water Fund is used for repairs and maintenance of the water system. No other questions/comments were made.
2. Public Hearing was closed at 7:09 p.m.

**Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**115 N. Thomson, Iowa, LA 70647**  
**City Hall Meeting Room**  
**May 20, 2024 7:09 p.m.**

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

Present: Mayor Douglas Watkins; Council Members: Gerald Guidry, Daniel Hennigan, Julie Fontenot, and Vernessa Guillory; Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett; Town Attorney Eugene Bouquet; Chief of Police Keith Vincent; and about 21 citizens. Absent was Council Member Joe Becnel.

Mayor Watkins established a quorum was present.

Invocation by Council Member Daniel Hennigan, followed by Pledge.

It was **moved** by Daniel Hennigan, **seconded** by Julie Fontenot to amend agenda by changing the word introduction, of item 4, to discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

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

It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to approve minutes of Special Meeting April 24, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins announced that Mr. Doug Johnson was first on the agenda and asked him to come forward. Mr. Johnson came forward with his concerns about the town's ordinance on noise. He talked about the issues he has with the noise and the condition of people's property in town and would like to see the town cleaned up. Council Member Julie Fontenot discussed the wording of the noise ordinance and stated what she would like to change in the ordinance. Mr. Johnson said that was all he had. Mayor Watkins asked if anyone else had anything to say. Nobody had any more comments. Mayor talked about the noise ordinance being out of date and needing to be changed. Mr. Bouquet agreed that the ordinance should be changed.

Mayor Watkins read item two of the agenda. Ms. Belinda Sias came forward. Julie Fontenot asked where the mobile home was located and where she was moving it. Ms. Belinda gave the addresses as requested and Mayor Watkins showed Julie Fontenot the map and how the mobile home would be situated at the new location. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to approve the variance of moving the mobile home from 110 Bowers Street to West Aly Street. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item three of the agenda. He gave information about the Summer Feeding Program. He said that the report from the Summer Feeding Program, for Town of Iowa meals served, includes a site not in the Town of Iowa. Mr. Eric Johnson came forward and announced that he serves on the board of Human Services for Calcasieu Parish and handed out packets to Council Members. He reported the number of meals served from the years 2020 to 2023 at the sites included within the Town of Iowa. He reported how many meals were delivered to Bell City Site. He requested that the Council consider funding the Summer Feeding Program. Council Members Julie Fontenot and Vernessa Guillory asked Mr. Johnson about the sites and what meals would be served. Mayor Watkins asked Mr. Johnson for clarification about the town's tax dollars going outside of the town. Citizens gave comments and asked questions in favor of the town agreeing to pay \$6500.00 toward the Summer Feeding Program. Mr. Tarek Polite, Director of Human Services for Calcasieu Parish, came forward. He explained the designed Summer Feeding Program. Mayor Watkins thanked Mr. Polite for coming and asked if the agreement could be changed to state only the sites for the Town of Iowa. Mr. Polite agreed. Mayor Watkins asked, and Mr. Polite reiterate that Bell City would not be affected and still receive meals through the Summer Feeding Program, by removing the stated site from the Town of Iowa's agreement with the Summer Feeding Program. After discussion, it was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to approve funding of serving two sites for breakfast and lunch in the amount of \$6500.00. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item 4 of the agenda. He explained that there is not a balanced budget to present. He said that he is expecting a couple of special meetings to be held before there is a good balanced budget. He reported some of the issues concerning balancing the budget, rising costs, infrastructure, and decrease in revenues. He announced the proposed projects and the means of funding these projects. Mr. Macer asked questions about receiving a comprehensive report, he continued with stating concerns of the hiring of employees for the Town of Iowa. Ms. Gabrielle Lowder asked about the 2023 Water Report. She asked about the way the town could implement programs to improve the water grade for the Town of Iowa. She said even though the town received an A grade she was confused because certain other parts of the grading showed otherwise. She asked about a plan for the water infrastructure. Mayor explained that a plan cannot be put in place until the assessment is completed. He said you will see it as it comes through. Mr. Macer and Mayor Watkins discussed the issues concerning the water and wastewater infrastructure and the

possibility of making improvements. Chief Vincent talked about the discussions that was had with the employees. He talked about the health care benefits that have been cut in the past from the budget. He encouraged the Mayor and Council not to cut any more of these benefits. Mayor Watkins stated that he does not think there is an issue in paying the health care benefits. He stated that the bigger issue is where we need to lay people off. Ms. Johnson made comments about her thoughts on employees' benefits and the number of employees hired and needed. She stated that she thought there were not enough police officers now. Mayor Watkins reiterated that health care benefits should not be an issue. He said the insurance will not be cut. Mayor Watkins gave a report on what the town had in savings in 2020 and what the town presently has in savings. He reported that over two million dollars was spent and not replaced. He reported that the town was borrowing this money to make payroll. Mr. Erik Johnson, Sr. asked about the fines and tickets that the police department wrote that are not paid. Mayor Watkins said he does not have those totals. Mayor Watkins responded that court cost expenses need to be considered when looking at the generation of fines.

Mayor Watkins read item five of the agenda. Upon the recommendation of Chief Vincent, it was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to hire Megan Thibodeaux as part-time dispatcher as of 4/22/2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item six. Upon the recommendation of Chief Vincent, it was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to hire Austin Sonnier for full-time patrol as of 5/2/2024, testing pending. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read Item seven of the agenda. He read the proclamation proclaiming May 16, 2024, as Police Officers Memorial Day.

Mayor Watkins read item eight of the agenda. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to adopt Ordinance 2024-07. The motion passed unanimously.

**ORDINANCE 2024-07  
AN ORDINANCE  
AMENDING THE FY 2023/2024 BUDGET FOR THE  
TOWN OF IOWA LOUISIANA**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana that:  
The following is an amended statement of the FY23/24 Budget

SECTION 1: The following is an amended statement of the probable receipts and disbursements of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2023 and ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and the same is hereby declared to be and is designated the adopted amended budget for the Town of Iowa, Louisiana for FY 2023-2024.

**General Fund**

<b>Changes:</b>	<b>Budget</b>		<b>Actual</b>
<b>Revenues:</b>			
<b>Transfer in: Sales Tax I</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>\$150,000.00</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>			
<b>Other Equipment</b>			
<b>Computer Servers and licenses</b>	<b>\$5,000.00</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>\$155,000.00</b>
<b>For police and city hall</b>			

**Sales Tax I Water Improvement**



of education it is located by the school. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any other questions or comments. No other comments or questions were made.

Mayor Watkins read item ten of the agenda. He presented a draft of the Five Page Comprehensive Master Plan. There was a short discussion of the Plan for explanation purposes. Mayor Watkins said it is a only draft.

Mayor Watkins read item eleven of the agenda and asked Cindy Mallett to give the report of finance. Cindy Mallett reported April financials as presented to the Council Members.

With no further business to discuss, it was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Julie Fontenot, to adjourn meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

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Douglas N Watkins, Mayor

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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 June 10, 2024 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 ordinance:

#### Ordinance 2024-09

An Ordinance authorizing the name of E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Located in the Town of Iowa, Louisiana to be Amended and Changed to Foreman Street and Otherwise with respect thereto.

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. Published in Lake Charles American Press.