

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

June 3, 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. He announced that before the meeting starts Mr. Eugene Bouquet, Town Attorney had something to say.

Mr. Bouquet addressed the problem that occurred at the last Council Meeting. He said there were a lot of people talking and it was difficult to understand what was going on. He said that if a person wants to speak, they have to raise their hand and be recognized by the chair. He said he wants everyone to have the opportunity to speak. He then asked that the person come to the podium to speak. He said we will follow this procedure tonight and in the future. Also, if you talk to someone in private, please keep it down.

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 24 citizens.

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

It was moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot to adopt agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory to approve minutes as submitted for Regular Meeting, May 20, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins announced that this is a special meeting about the budget only and we need to restrict our comments to the budget.

Mayor Watkins read the first item on the agenda; Introduction of Ordinance 2024-08, An Ordinance Adopting an Operating Budget of Revenues and Expenditures for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025. He read the budget message for the proposed budget. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any comments.

Council Member Daniel Hennigan said, in his opinion, we could find a way to bump up the proposed police department's budget without reducing any of the other line items catastrophically.

Chief Vincent asked to speak. He came forward. He said he reviewed the budget and disagrees with it. He encourages the Mayor and council Members to listen to what Mr. Hennigan has to say.

Mr. Joshua Macer came forward and was recognized. He asked specific questions about the amount of cuts to the police budget, proposed projects, the sales tax earned from the farmer's market, and the cost of the farmer's market. Mr. Bouquet explained the process of the introduction, passing of the budget, and the following of the adopted budget by the departments. Mayor Watkins told Mr. Macer that the expenses of the farmer's market are paid from grant funds.

Ms. Cathrine Trahan came before the Council. She began to speak of something other than the budget. Mayor Watkins told her to please stick to the subject of the budget. She continued without regard to what she was told. Mr. Bouquet interrupted her and told her to stop, but she continued to speak louder. Chief Vincent went to the podium and spoke with Ms. Trahan. Ms. Trahan stated that the town used to be safe but

has not been safe over the past few years. She also asked the Mayor and Council to listen to the young representative.

Mr. Tyler Foster came forward and asked what funds, in the budget, was allocated for the ball parks. Mayor told him at this time, \$180,000.00. He asked if it would be possible to have turf instead of grass for the fields. Council Member Daniel Hennigan explained the history of the plans and costs of building a quadplex. It was explained that the idea, at this time, was to do one field at a time or one field every other year. Mayor Watkins explained that the town gets no revenues from baseball. He also stated that there are a lot of misunderstandings about the town and the pony league.

It was **moved by**, Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to table introduction of ordinance 2024-08, An Ordinance Adopting an Operating Budget of Revenues and Expenditures for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item two of the agenda and said that this also could not be passed. Mayor Watkins explained that the resolution is the allocation of sales tax based on the budget. He said, if the budget changes, then the sales tax allocation will change. It was **moved by**, Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to table item two, Motion to approve Resolution 2024-13, A Resolution for Reallocation of Percentages for the Town of Iowa's Sales taxes.

With no further business, it was moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

ATTEST:

Dougals N. Watkins, Mayor

Cynthia Mallett, Town Clerk