

Town of Iowa

P.O. Box 1707

Iowa, La. 70647

Ph#337-582-3535/Fax#337-582-7776



Neal Watkins
Mayor

Cynthia Mallett
Clerk

Eugene Bouquet
City Attorney

Council Members

Julie Fontenot
Joe Becnel
Vernessa Guillory
Daniel Hennigan
Gerald Guidry

Monthly Mayor's Report

February 15, 2023

THE UGLY

As most of you know, things really slowed down during the pandemic and one of the side effects which still lingers to this day, is higher costs. Add inflation to this and we have some tough decisions to make in our near future. Costs of supplies and replacement parts needed for both our waste water treatment and for drinking water production have increased over the last couple of years to the point that will require us to consider a rate increase. Additionally, Waste Management rates for trash pick-up have gone up as well and no rate increase has been issued. In our most recent council meeting this past Monday the 13th rate increases were discussed. We will continue to discuss this matter and hope to arrive at a decision sometime prior to April.

THE BAD

DEBRIS: Debris pick-up for the time being has been halted due to the high cost to provide this service. As we are running negative concerning the budget, we wish to be prudent with the dollars that we have available.

I again am asking residents, for the time being who have a way to haul your debris to the landfill to please do so. If you do not have a way to haul your debris to the landfill, please refrain from placing at road during the month of February and March, this would help us to reduce the costs allowing for funds to be spent appropriately.

We have taken steps for our maintenance workers to pick up litter that may have made it into the ditches, as they are able. I am asking for help in this matter, as we are seeing in some areas that people are tossing items from vehicles onto the roads, which is littering. If you witness someone tossing litter and have a make, model, and plate number, please call town hall to process a complaint. I will be more than happy to have the police department handle the perpetrator.

We all live here, lets take pride in our town.

WATER METERS: The weather has not been very helpful as we continue to install the remaining meters. In an effort not to tear up the ditches and yards, we are resorting to using shovels and digging by hand. As we have set a deadline for installs to be complete by the end of March, we do hope that we have the weather to accomplish this task.

THE GOOD

CUTTING OVERHEAD/EXPENSES: We have taken steps to reign in spending, partly by eliminating 3rd party contractors, subscriptions, services and employee reduction. Currently our expenditures have been reduced a little over \$20,000 per month.

WEBSITE: Directly related to a cost savings, we are moving our web service to a different provider which will save us about \$4000.00 per year. This will give us a better site and will incorporate a better alert system than our current Code Red. We are anticipating the new site to be up and running by the 1st of March.

FARMERS MARKET: We are making lots of progress pulling this program together and we will be updating this information on the website as we have it available. This will be posted in the town hall lobby and a copy can be provided as we update.

UTILITIES: As discussed in the previous newsletter our Sewage, Streets, and Water departments are working on a structured plan that will be worked in a quadrant-by-quadrant process. This will be posted on the website as well as being available in the town hall lobby

ADMINISTRATION

This has been a very busy month as festive plans are being made. From the Gumbo cook-off on the 18th at the KC hall, to the Mardi Gras parade and Chicken Run! I hope that all have an enjoyable and safe time during these events. I look forward to judging the gumbo, as well as riding in the Mardi Gras parade. A shout out to both the KC's and Mr. Victorian and all they do for the town!

Mayors Chat: I would like to take this time to let each of you know that moving forward, once a month prior to our council meetings, I am making myself available for open conversations starting at 5:30 and ending at 6:30 pm. I simply request that we have respectful conversations, regardless of the topic.

Once again 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. I look forward to any and all interactions.

Mayor Watkins