

Town of Iowa

Douglas N. 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 Mayor's Report

April 7, 2023

THE UGLY

WATER again tops our report this month. For those of you that do read this report and are not inclined to speculation on social media or the grapevine, thank you for your community pride and understanding. I would like to again re-iterate, that the water rate change has not been implemented, as I do not wish to rush into a decision without vetting all the possibilities we have at hand. We hoped to have ALL of the meters completed by the end of March. We are now down to what looks like a week or two depending on the weather. Please report a leak if you see one, this will help us to be more efficient with your hard-earned tax dollars.

Furthermore, I would like to alert everyone that we do have an unusually high rate of delinquent accounts every month. This activity is costly for the individual, with additional fees for reconnects, as well as the manpower to cut off and unlock meters. Also, moving forward there will not be ANY reconnects before 7am or after 3:30pm as we have an obligation to restrict overtime to not drive up the cost of the water service.

I would also like to remind those that have had meters locked out, that it is a criminal offense to cut the locks on the meters.

For those that might need assistance with utility bills, please contact town hall for a list of options on financial help which is based on your income.

THE BAD

DEBRIS: Yes, Debris is on the list again. However, this month letters will be sent to those that have placed debris at the roadside. As we have been working towards a program for debris removal, I am at this time opposed to increasing utility bills for residents beyond our necessities. I am working on a program that "could" allow us the ability to have debris pick up service. Inflation along with increasing

cost of service and goods have created a negative affect on the town budget and I wish to be prudent with the dollars that we have available.

I again am asking for residents, for the time being, and have a way to haul your debris to the landfill to please do so for the foreseeable future.

LITTER: We have a couple of areas in our town that have become problem areas with litter. We all live here, let's take pride in our town.

WATER METERS: I would like to thank those that have been patient with the installs of the water meters. I would like to remind folks that the pipes in your yard are already buried; we are simply swapping out the meters. The water pipes are set; therefore, we do not have the ability to make changes to the height, squareness to a structure/driveway, and in many cases level can't be achieved. That being said, there are a few on my list, needing to be addressed after all the meters are in. It is my intention to have meters dressed that have a need for more soil. Thanks again for your understanding in this matter. If you have a specific issue on your property, please utilize the website (iowala.org). Click on "contact us" and select "water meter" in the drop-down menu or call Town Hall and ask for Mrs. Roxane.

INFLATION: This continues to be an issue. Insurance as we all know, has gone up and the town has not been immune from cost increases. Health, property, and wind insurance policies have nearly doubled since Hurricane Laura. Nearly, \$40,000 increase in Health Insurance alone.

THE GOOD

FLOOD MITIGATION: Working very closely with many individuals and organizations, we believe that we have identified a potential plan to help mitigate (reduce) the severity of flooding which directly impacts the Town of Iowa. Provided a small number of hurdles can be worked out, a submittal for funding could be in place within the next few weeks.

WEBSITE: We are incredibly pleased with the new website and are excited to see many of our residents signing up for the alerts. As a reminder, if you have a streetlight out in your area, please use the "Contact Us" page to report the outage.

UTILITIES: Now that the install of water meters are winding down, we will be able to turn our attention to our regular maintenance which consists of mowing, weed control, jetting of culverts and street work. This will be completed in an orderly fashion and our schedule for mowing will be posted to the website by May 1st, as well as a copy in the lobby of Town Hall.

ADMINISTRATION

I personally would like to thank those residents that have had specific issues and have either called me personally or stopped me while near their residence these last 3 months. It is encouraging to me, to have a conversation that has a singular goal in mind and that is to not just address the issue, but to resolve the issue at hand. Even though it might require patience and time on your part, I do wish to publicly thank you!

As many of you know, over past years, processes and materials have changed relating to our infrastructure (water & sewer lines, pumps, street repairs) here in town. All of these items need to be addressed, and the town lacks extremely specific information on locations for items such as water valves for example. This in turn causes water and sewer lines to become an “all hands-on deck” scenario which disrupts routine maintenance and becomes costly. Thus, I will be seeking a grant that will allow the town to purchase equipment that will allow us to digitally map our utilities and have the ability to do so for any future growth. Overall, this will reduce labor costs.

For those folks in Ash Ridge, we will soon begin to make repairs surrounding the drainage issues. Thanks for your patience and understanding.

Love the Boot, Iowa event will take place on Saturday, the 22nd of April. Please join me and other residents and business owners as we pick up litter through our town. T-shirts for this event are being donated. Please contact Mrs. Roxane at Town Hall to sign up! Or go to the website for more information.

Mayor's Chat: As a reminder, prior to each council meeting, I am making myself available for open conversations starting at 5:30pm and ending at 6:30 pm. I simply request that we have respectful conversations, regardless of the topic.



Mayor Watkins