

Town of Iowa

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Monthly Mayor's Report

March 7, 2023

THE UGLY

MONTHLY RATE INCREASES: As indicated in the last report, rate increases will become a reality. We have not considered this decision lightly and continue to sort out the specifics of this increase. As we will be at least 95% complete on water meter installs by the end of March, it is my belief that we should have a mock billing to verify our proposed rates and be sure they are closer to a break-even point for our utilities. We will be discussing the rates again during the upcoming council meeting Monday March 13th @7pm and all are welcome to attend.

ASH RIDGE SUBDIVISON: Currently we are assessing the "sink holes" in Ash Ridge. For the record these are directly related to poor workmanship during the time of construction. As the town accepted this property as "built", this is an inherited issue that has to be maintained. One of the worst locations is a direct result of underground boring that penetrated a major drain line. We are currently reviewing steps needed to rectify this situation. This will be a large dollar item and will require tax dollars to fix. It is my hope that we can seek grants to help as this will be a major undertaking. **Please join me on Monday the 13th of March between 5:30 and 6:30 @ town hall for the "Mayors Chat" if you have specific questions related to this issue.** Monthly Council meeting begins @ 7Pm; all are welcome to attend.

THE BAD

DEBRIS: As a reminder, debris pick-up for the time being has been halted due to the high cost to provide this service. At this time there are no tax dollars available to provide this service. Please be aware that placing debris out for pick up will inhibit crews from mowing and maintaining.

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 during the

month of March and April from placing it at the road. This would help us to reduce the costs allowing for funds to be spent appropriately.

MOWING: I would like to make everyone aware that we have most of our town crews working on completing the install of our water meters throughout town. Because of this we have and will fall further behind on maintaining the growth of grass this month. Starting in April we will undergo work on our grids beginning in the North West grid, then moving to the next grid. I will provide a map in April for these grids and approximate times of the month they are worked. This map will be available @ town hall and viewable on the website.

THE GOOD

TOWN BUDGET: It's that time of year when we start working on the yearly budget for the town. As from the last report we have taken steps to rein 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. It is my intent to see that your tax dollars are allocated to infrastructure for the town.

WATER METERS: We are hoping to do a mock billing cycle in April. By doing so, we can confirm our rates and test the system. As some of the electronics have been in the ground for many years, we do anticipate that some will need to be changed. So, provided we have no setbacks, metered billing will start on May 1st, pending council approval on April 10th, 2023.

WEBSITE: Our new website is up and running and we hope that you find it easier to navigate. We encourage you to subscribe for notices and updates for the town.

ADMINISTRATION

I would like to take an opportunity to thank the volunteers that worked both the gumbo cook-off, as well as the Parade and Chicken run. From my understanding this was the largest crowd ever in the history of the parade. A personal thanks for those that invited me to participate in both events. I was both impressed with the good behavior and the many people I met from out of state that chose to come to our town, to witness their first "chicken run".

I look forward to a couple of events this month with the folks at the Senior Center. I know that the breakfast will be a good time and the Fish Fry will be awesome. Thanks to the seniors for the invite!

As a pledge to the town for this upcoming budget year, directly related to inflation and my commitment to the infrastructure: I will stand firm against any new contracts that involve parks and recreation, unless it is paid for by grants and or private funds. In addition, no new vehicles or equipment for town use or maintenance. Only catastrophic/non repairable items will be replaced.

Regarding the police department, Chief Vincent's budget will include funds for replacement of vehicles as is warranted and expected. Both Chief and I are committed to producing budgets for our respective departments that reflect stability and growth.

Mayors Chat: I will be available between 5:30-6:30 pm on Monday the 13th for any and all questions. Reminder, 7PM is our monthly Council Meeting and all are welcome to attend. Again, 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