

**Minutes
Public Hearing
Town of Iowa
115 N. Thomson
Iowa, LA 70647
March 11, 2024 at 7:00p.m.**

Mayor Watkins called the public hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. Present was Mayor Watkins; Council Members; Gerald Guidry, Joe Becnel, Vernessa Guillory, Julie Fontenot, and Daniel Hennigan; Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett; Town Attorney Eugene Bouquet; Police Chief Keith Vincent; about 20 citizens.

Mayor Watkins read the title of the proposed ordinance and asked if anyone had any questions or comments.

Ordinance No. 2024-03, An Ordinance annexing Approximately 3,150 Linear Feet of Interstate Highway 10 and East Frontage Road into the Corporate Limits of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana

A citizen asked what property was being annexed. Mayor Watkins explained that it was a section of Interstate 10 that was not annexed at the time when the interstate was annexed years ago. No other comments or questions were made.

Mayor Watkins closed the public hearing at 7:02 pm.

**Minutes
Town of Iowa
115 N. Thomson
Iowa, LA
March 11, 2024, At 7:02 p.m.**

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

Mayor Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

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 17 citizens.

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

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

It was **moved by** Julie Fontenot, **seconded by** Joe Becnel to approve minutes as submitted for Regular Meeting, February 12, 2024, with the amendment of referenced date of meeting, February 14, 2024 to February 12, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins asked the town employees to stand and be recognized. Mayor Watkins stated that he is honored to work with these employees. He said that a troubling thing has happened recently. A couple of employees were cursed out. He said these people are here to help us and he would like this type of behavior curtailed.

It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Julie Fontenot to recess meeting to enter Executive Session to discuss negotiations with respect to prospective litigation after formal written demand: State Farm Insurance and Tokio Marine Insurance. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was recessed at 7:06pm. Mayor, Council Members, Town Attorney, and Town Clerk left meeting room.

It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Julie Fontenot to resume regular meeting. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting resumed at 7:36 pm.

Old Business:

Mayor Watkins read the one and only item under old business; motion to approve SEI Vineyards Development as presented and to approve the Town of Iowa taking ownership, operation, and maintenance to the water and sewer system once constructed to standards of Town of Iowa. He asked if there were any questions or comments. Mr. Freeman, representing SEI Vineyards and Mr. Joseph, representative of Iowa Housing Authority came forward. Mr. Freeman presented information to each Councilmember and Mayor. Council Member Julie Fontenot asked about the grounds management and what happens if residents do not maintain their yards. Mr. Freeman said they, as the managers, will take care of it. He said they are owner and manager. Mr. Joseph stated his role with the Iowa Housing Authority and his relationship with SEI Vineyards. He said that the policies the Housing Authority developed have brought the crime down and he is working together with SEI Vineyards on this. He said there is a need for this kind of housing. Ms. Vernessa Guillory asked about the availability of the manager and if someone would be on site. Mr. Freeman said someone will be there 40 hours a week. Council Member Daniel Hennigan asked about Residential average stay, Safeguard for the town's interest if they decide to sell it and about renovations as needed. Mr. Freeman answered. He said that the average stay of a resident is 3-5 years. He said there is no government subsidy attached to this property. He said that his company must stay with this program for at least 15 years to receive the tax credits. He said they intend to stay and not sell. He said they don't intend to sell the property. Mr. Freeman said in about 15-20 years they will receive additional credits for renovations. He stated that they will do day to day maintenance then he explained the well-made construction of the units. There was a discussion about the drainage plan and flood zone of the property. Mr. Landry asked about the town's ability to sustain the infrastructure of the town's water and sewer. Mayor answered Mr. Landry. Mayor said that everything along Highway 90 will be new with new lift stations. He said we will have a report that says what we need to do as we concentrate on our infrastructure. Mayor asked if there were any more comments or questions. No further comments were made.

It was **moved by** Joe Becnel, **seconded by** Gerald Guidry to approve SEI Vineyards Development as presented and to approve the Town of Iowa taking ownership, operation, and maintenance of the water and sewer system once constructed to standards of Town of Iowa. The motion passed with the vote was as follows:

YEAS: Joe Becnel, Gerald Guidry, Vernessa Guillory, and Julie Fontenot NAYS: Daniel Hennigan
ABSENT: None ABSTAIN: None

New Business:

Mayor Watkins read the first item on the agenda; It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Julie Fontenot to adopt Ordinance 2024-03, An Ordinance Annexing Approximately 3,150 Linear Feet of Interstate Highway 10 and East Frontage Road into the Corporate Limits of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana. The motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE 2024-03

AN ORDINANCE ANNEXING APPROXIMATELY 3,150 LINEAR FEET OF INTERSTATE HIGHWAY 10 AND EAST FRONTAGE ROAD INTO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE TOWN OF IOWA, LOUISIANA

WHEREAS, La. R.S. 33:180 provides for annexation of public property and roads by ordinance, upon petition of the public body owning the land to be included. The municipality may upon majority vote adopt such an ordinance without the necessity of advertisement, petition by residents, or public hearing.

WHEREAS, La. R.S. 33:180.B requires that annexation of the paved portion of a public road include all property adjacent to at least one side of such road.

WHEREAS, all property adjacent to the I-10 property on both sides of I-10 eastward to the Calcasieu Parish boundary was annexed into the Town of Iowa by Ordinances 1 and 2 of 1999; and,

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation and Development, State of Louisiana, has provided written notice of no objection to the Town of Iowa annexing the property described herein; and,

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the Town of Iowa to annex the Property into the corporate limits of the Town of Iowa.

THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Iowa Town Council of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, in regular session convened this 11th day of March, 2024:

§1. That the Town of Iowa does hereby annex and incorporate into the corporate limits of the Town of Iowa the following described property, situated in Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana,

DESCRIPTION

Property owned by the Department of Transportation and Development, State of Louisiana, consisting of approximately 17 acres encompassing the paved and unpaved portions of the full width of the right-of-way of Interstate Highway 10 ("I-10") for the area described herein, including the East Frontage Road on its North side, with a linear dimension of 3,150 feet along the center of I-10, being further described as:

Commencing inside the corporate limits of the Town of Iowa at a point on the center median of Interstate Highway 10 ("I-10") aligned with the center of Louisiana Highway 383, I-10 Exit 43, thence proceed Easterly along the centerline median of I-10 for approximately 2,250 feet to its intersection with the Town of Iowa corporate limits line for the Point of Beginning of the annexed portion of I-10; thence from said Point of Beginning, proceed Easterly along the centerline median of I-10 for approximately 3,150 feet to the Calcasieu Parish boundary with Jefferson Davis Parish, said point also being approximately 1,800 feet West of the Point of Curvature of the Eastbound I-10 off ramp to I-10 Exit 44 at US Highway 165.

§2. This Ordinance shall become effective after final adoption and publication of same in the manner prescribed by law and in accordance with La. R.S. 33:173.

This Ordinance was introduced at the regular meeting of the Board of Council Members on February 12, 2024; Notice of Public Hearing was published on February 22, 2024 and said public hearing having been held, the title having been read and the Ordinance considered, on motion to adopt, by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot, a record vote was taken and the following result was had:

YEAS: Daniel Hennigan, Julie Fontenot, Gerald Guidry, Vernessa Guillory, Joe Becnel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

WHEREUPON, the presiding officer declared the above Ordinance duly adopted on the 11th day of March, 2024.

DOUGLAS WATKINS
MAYOR

I certify that the above ordinance was presented to the Mayor by me on the 12th day of March, 2024.

CYNTHIA MALLETT, TOWN CLERK

I, acknowledge receipt of the above ordinance from the Town Clerk on this 12th day of March, 2024.

DOUGLAS WATKINS
MAYOR

I, hereby approve the above ordinance on this 12th day of March, 2024.

DOUGLAS WATKINS
MAYOR

I certify that the above ordinance was received by me from the Mayor on this 12th day of March, 2024.

CYNTHIA MALLETT, TOWN CLERK

Mayor Watkins read item two of the agenda. Introduce Ordinance No. 2024-04, An Ordinance creating “The Old Spanish Trail Economic Development District, State of Louisiana”; Defining the Boundaries thereof from which area Local and State Sales Tax increments will be determined and used to finance Economic Development projects in accordance with and as authorized by Part II of Chapter 27 of Title 33 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended; and providing for other matters in connection with the foregoing. He asked if anyone had any comments or questions. There were no comments or questions.

Mayor Watkins read item three of the agenda. Introduce Ordinance No 2024-05, An Ordinance Levying an additional Sales Tax of Two Percent (2%) in the “The Old Spanish Trail Economic Development District, State of Louisiana”;(The District); Designating the Full Amount of Such Sales tax as the Sales Tax increments in the District from which the Local and State Sales Tax will be determined and used to Finance Economic Development projects in The District in accordance with and as authorized by Part II, Chapter 27, Title 33 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended; designating the initial annual baseline collection rate and establishing a monthly baseline collection rate for The District; Pledging and Dedicating such Tax increments to reimburse Economic Development Costs and Providing for other matters in connection with the Foregoing. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any questions or comments. No questions or comments were made.

Mayor Watkins read item four of the agenda. Introduce Ordinance No. 2024-06, An Ordinance adopting Land Use & Development Regulations within the Incorporated Area of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any questions or comments. No questions or comments were made.

Mayor Watkins read item five of the agenda. It was **moved by** Julie Fontenot, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to Approve Resolution 2024-05, A Resolution authorizing signers on a government account for LCDBG Funds. The motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2024-05

AUTHORIZED SIGNERS ON A GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNT

WHEREAS, the Town of Iowa needs to open a new checking account for the purpose of receiving and expending funds from Louisiana Community Block Grant;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Town Council for the Town of Iowa, Louisiana in regular session convened this 11th day of March, 2024, that they hereby authorize the following signatures on the account of:

Town of Iowa LCDBG Account Number: **TBD**

To be held at:

The Bank

114 N Thomson

Iowa, LA 70647

1. **Douglas N Watkins**
2. **Joe Becnel**
3. **Vernessa Guillory**
4. **Daniel Hennigan**
5. **Julie Fontenot**
6. **Gerald Guidry**

The resolution having been submitted to a vote, the vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: Julie Fontenot, Vernessa Guillory, Joe Becnel, Daniel Hennigan, and
Gerald Guidry

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

The above resolution was unanimously approved and adopted in a regular meeting of the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana.

DOUGLAS N WATKINS, MAYOR

ATTEST:

CYNTHIA MALLET, TOWN CLERK

Mayor Watkins read the sixth item on the agenda. It was **moved by Julie Fontenot, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to Approve Resolution 2024-06, A Resolution to Apply for and Use The Bank's Online viewing feature for all Town of Iowa Checking and Saving Accounts. Mayor Watkins explained the purpose of having the ability to view transactions. He said it was because of the breach City Hall had in our computer system and explained that this is a view only agreement. The motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2024-06

A RESOLUTION TO APPLY FOR AND USE THE BANK'S ONLINE VIEWING FEATURES FOR ALL TOWN OF IOWA CHECKING AND SAVING ACCOUNTS

WHEREAS, the Town of Iowa needs to monitor the activity of transactions of The Bank Checking and Saving Accounts;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Town Council for the Town of Iowa, Louisiana in regular session convened this 11th day of March 2024, that they hereby apply for and request authorization for Town Clerk, Cynthia Mallett, to use "The Bank" 's online feature for the purpose of checking deposits, viewing transactions, and printing statements.

The resolution having been submitted to a vote; the vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: Julie Fontenot, Vernessa Guillory, Joe Becnel, Daniel Hennigan, and Gerald Guidry

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

1. **Douglas N Watkins** _____

- 2. Joe Becnel _____
- 3. Vernessa Guillory _____
- 4. Daniel Hennigan _____
- 5. Julie Fontenot _____
- 6. Gerald Guidry _____

The above resolution was unanimously approved and adopted in a regular meeting of the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana.

DOUGLAS N WATKINS, MAYOR

ATTEST:

CYNTHIA MALLET, TOWN CLERK

Mayor Watkins read the seventh item on the agenda. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to approve Resolution 2024-07, A Resolution to Declare Property as Surplus and Assign to LPS Municipal Surplus Property Program for Online Sale. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 2024-07

**A Resolution to Declare Property as Surplus And Assign to
LPS Municipal Surplus Property Program for Online Sale**

Council Meeting Date: March 11, 2024 Agenda item: Surplus Property
Presented by: Mayor Watkins

Be It Resolved:

1. **The Town of Iowa declares that the following property used by multiple Departments is no longer needed by the town and is declared surplus property and is assigned to LaMATS through the LPS Surplus Property Program, 6767 Perkins Rd., Baton Rouge, LA 70808 to be auctioned online. The listed property will be viewable and will be auctioned online at www.lamats.net/surplus commencing the day of publication of this resolution for no fewer than 7 days until sold or withdrawn.**

Description

- 1) 3 Car Push Bumpers
- 2) 1 SUV Push Bumper

The Town of Iowa reserves the right to evaluate and to accept the highest bid if deemed to be the fair market value or to relist the unsold item.

Instructions

[Lake Charles American Press, jackie.martz@americanpress.com] and forward to the LPS Municipal Surplus Property Program Administrator for listing and publication paul@lamats.net.

ATTEST:

Cynthia Mallett, MMC

Mayor Watkins read item eight of the agenda. He gave an explanation for the need of this agreement. He said that a lot of work was lost when we were breached. He said we are required to submit a report by a certain date and we were not given an extension to complete it. The deadline is approaching, and this company can come in and get us in compliance. It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to approve 120Water Master Services Agreement with and between Town of Iowa and NB-Beamer Holdings LLC for the purpose of creating a concise list of service locations and material

classifications for the water system as required by D.E.Q. and authorize Mayor Watkins to sign said agreement. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read the ninth item of the agenda. Upon recommendation of Chief Vincent, it was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to approve promotion of Corey Henry from Patrolman to Patrolman First Class. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief Vincent asked the agenda be amended. He said his secretary sent a message to add a couple of items to be added to the agenda.

It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to amend the agenda to add: Motion to hire Amy Henry as Full-Time Dispatcher effective 2-23-24 and to hire Ronnie Guillory as Part-Time Patrolman effective 2-23-24. The motion passed unanimously.

It was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to hire Amy Henry as Full-Time Dispatcher effective 2-23-24 and to hire Ronnie Guillory as Part-Time Patrolman effective 2-23-24. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins asked Town Clerk Cindy Mallett to give the Financial Report. Cindy reported on the finances of the Town of Iowa as presented to the Mayor and Council Members.

Mr. Tom Gayle approached the Mayor and Town Council to hear him.

Mayor Watkins recognized Ms. Tosh Leonard. Ms. Leonard complained about the drainage and asked if the culverts could be cleaned. Mayor Watkins said that he understood her concerns.

Ms. Johnson complained about the company that has been laying lines throughout town. She said they drove in her yard. Mayor suggested that she call City Hall in the morning and talk to Kim about it. Chief Vincent said they can do an offense report.

Mr. Tom Gayle approached the Mayor and Town Council and asked for time to speak. He introduced himself as an attorney representing Pro-Quarters. He said he was here to officially tender a rent check for 10 years of payments and an economic analysis report. Mayor Watkins asked if all the members received a copy of the feasibility study. They confirmed that they had.

With no further business, it was **moved by Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to adjourn meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 pm.

ATTEST:

Dougals N. Watkins, Mayor

Cynthia Mallett, Town Clerk

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 April 8, 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 ordinances:

Ordinance 2024-04

Ordinance 2024-04, An Ordinance Creating "The Old Spanish Trail Economic Development District, State of Louisiana"; Defining the Boundaries thereof from which area local and State Sales Tax increments will be determined and used to Finance Economic Development Projects in accordance with and as authorized by Part II of Chapter 27 of Title 33 of the Louisiana revised Statutes of 1950, as Amended; and Providing for other matters in connection with the foregoing.

Ordinance 2024-05

Ordinance Levying an Additional Sales Tax of Two Percent (2%) in the "Old Spanish Trail Economic Development District, State of Louisiana" (The District); Designating the full amount of such Sales Tax as the Sales Tax increments in the District from which the Local and State Sales tax will be determined and used to Finance Economic Development Projects in the District in accordance with and as Authorized by Part II, Chapter 27, Title 33 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as Amended; Designating the initial annual baseline collection rate and establishing a monthly baseline collection rate for The District; Pledging and Dedicating such tax increments to reimburse Economic Development Costs and Providing for other matters in connection with the foregoing.

Ordinance 2024-06

An Ordinance Adopting Land Use and Development Regulations within the incorporated Area of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana

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.