

**Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**115 N. Thomson, Iowa, LA 70647**  
**July 14, 2025**

Mayor Watkins and Town Council met in Regular session this date in compliance with all requirements as to notice. Mayor Watkins addressed the Council Members and the public on updates for the following topics: Employee and their positions within the administration, Population decrease within the corporate limits but increase in the surrounding areas of the parish, expectation of the Mayor and the position of the Mayor, Ordinances and the lack of enforcement of some ordinances, Employee Handbook and violations of the handbook, Proposed Budget and needing to pass it so the town would no longer be in violation of the Government Budget Act, Moving forward with projects and how to communicate, Future removal of property tax from the income of Economic Development revenue.

Mayor Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:47pm.

Invocation was said by Council Member Joe Becnel followed by the pledge.

Mayor Watkins called roll. Present: Mayor Douglas Watkins; Council Members: Joe Becnel, Gerald Guidry, Julie Fontenot, Daniel Hennigan, and Vernessa Guillory. A quorum was established.

Others present were Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett; Town Attorney Eugene Bouquet; Chief of Police Keith Vincent and about 22 people.

The Town Attorney, Eugene Bouquet, addressed the council and announced that he will be retiring this year. He also reported that he has met with someone who he thinks would be a good candidate for his replacement and will bring him to the meeting next month.

It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Joe Becnel to adopt the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

It was **moved by** Julie Fontenot, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to approve minutes for regular meeting June 9, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins asked Town Clerk, Cynthia Mallett to give the financial report. Cynthia gave the financial report. She asked if there were any questions or comments. Belinda Dugas had questions about the bidding process for large projects, Cynthia explained the process for requesting and awarding bids; Patsy Johnson asked if it was the town or the property owners that had torn down some of the older structures around town recently, Cynthia answered that it had been the property owners; Patsy Johnson also asked which fund the trash pickup was budgeted in.

Mayor Watkins read the first item on the agenda, Motion to accept bids for FY 2023 LCDBG Demolition/Clearance Program and award contract to the lowest qualified bidder, Louisiana Waste Solutions, and authorize Mayor Watkins to execute all documents necessary for this program. He asked if there were any questions or comments. There were no questions.

It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Joe Becnel to reject all bids received June 12, 2025. The motion passed unanimously. It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Julie Fontenot to accept and award bid of July 3, 2025 to Louisiana Waste Solutions and authorize Mayor Watkins to execute all documents necessary for this program. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read Resolution No. 2025-09, a resolution to apply for and accept the 2025 Strategic Planning Program Grant. He explained that this grant would pay for the planning phase for an emergency

operations center, boulevard, utility infrastructure, and economic development on town-owned property. He asked if there were any questions. Patsy Johnson, Chief Vincent, Kenneth Landry, Catherine Trahan and Belinda Dugas all had questions and/or comments related to the specifics of what this grant would pay for, if it was for the emergency operations center itself or only the road and infrastructure related to the facility, and which agencies would be housed in the center. Mayor Watkins explained the specifics of the grant and discussed the general plan for the emergency operations center.

It was **moved by** Joe Becnel, **seconded by** Gerald Guidry to approve Resolution No. 2025-09. The motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2025-09**  
**A Resolution applying for and accepting the 2025 Strategic Planning Program Grant**

WHEREAS, Delta Regional Authority works with a number of federal partners on programs designed to promote development and growth in economically distressed communities, and;

WHEREAS, the 2025 Strategic Planning Program Grant, with no matching funds, can assist with the creation of master plans, comprehensive economic development plans, etc. that problem-solve infrastructure upgrades for communities, and;

WHEREAS, the program will give public entities access to strategic planning funds to address long-standing issues and develop a roadmap for economic growth and opportunity, and;

WHEREAS, the Town of Iowa is in need of planning funds for the Emergency Operating Center, Boulevard, Utility Infrastructure, and Economic Development.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of Iowa, Louisiana, authorizes Mayor Watkins to apply, accept, and sign all required documents required for the said non-matching grant up to \$150,000.00 for the purpose of strategic planning for the Emergency Operating Center, Boulevard, Utility Infrastructure, and Economic Development.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY THE Town Council of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana on this 14<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025.

/s/Douglas N. Watkins, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Cynthia Mallett, MMC  
Town Clerk

Mayor Watkins read the next item on the agenda, to adopt Ordinance No. 2025-03, an ordinance related to adopting the 2025-2026 operating budget. He asked if there were any questions or comments. Chief Vincent asked to address the council. He thanked the mayor, town attorney and Councilmembers Joe Becnel and Daniel Hennigan for meeting with him at the beginning of July to discuss the budget and explained that he had proposed a budget with some cuts at that time. He also asked to be placed on the agenda to recommend hiring a part time dispatcher to replace one that resigned. Councilman Hennigan asked the Chief if he was in favor of passing the original proposed budget and amending, if needed, moving forward. The Chief said yes, if it was amended in a reasonable amount of time.

It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to amend the agenda to add a recommendation to hire a part time dispatcher by Chief Vincent. The motion passed unanimously.

It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Joe Becnel to hire Tabitha Whetstine for part time dispatcher based on the recommendation of Chief Vincent. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief Vincent then went on with a few announcements. He reported that the Senior BBQ was a success, as well as the joint fundraiser that was held with Iowa Fire Department. He also invited the elected officials and the public to attend the police department's First Annual National Night Out on August 5<sup>th</sup>.

It was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to adopt Ordinance No. 2025-03, an ordinance adopting an operating budget of Revenues and Expenditures for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026. The vote was as follows: Yeas: Joe Becnel, Julie Fontenot, Gerald Guidry and Vernessa Guillory; Nays: Daniel Hennigan; Abstain: None; Absent: None. The motion passed.

**ORDINANCE 2025 - 03**  
**AN ORDINANCE adopting an Operating Budget of Revenues and**  
**Expenditures for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending**  
**June 30, 2026.**

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the Mayor and the Iowa Town Council of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, in general session convened that:

SECTION 1: The attached detailed estimate of Revenues for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026, be and the same is hereby adopted to serve as an Operating Budget of Revenues for the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, during the same period.

SECTION 2: The attached estimates of Expenditures by departments for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026, be and the same is hereby adopted to serve as a budget of Expenditures for the Town during the said period.

SECTION 3: The adoption of this Operating Budget of Expenditures be and the same is hereby declared to operate as an appropriation of the amount therein set forth within the terms of the budget classification.

SECTION 4: Amounts are available for expenditures only to the extent included within the 2025 to 2026 budget. Further, it is the intent of this presentation to hereby authorize the Chief Administrative Officer the power to administer these budgets within a margin of plus or minus 5%.

Said Ordinance having been introduced on May 12, 2025 the title having been read, and a public hearing held on June 9, 2025.

The above ordinance was adopted at a duly convened meeting, July 14, 2025 on motion of Daniel Hennigan, seconded by Vernessa Guillory, upon a vote taken as follows:

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

NAYS: Daniel Hennigan

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

WHEREUPON, the presiding officer declared the above Ordinance duly adopted on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025.

**/s/DOUGLAS N. WATKINS, MAYOR**

I certify that the above ordinance was presented to the Mayor by me on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025.

**/s/CYNTHIA MALLETT, TOWN CLERK**

I, acknowledge receipt of the above ordinance from the Town Clerk on this 15<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025.

**/s/DOUGLAS N. WATKINS, MAYOR**

I, hereby approve the above ordinance on this 15<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025.

**/s/DOUGLAS N. WATKINS, MAYOR**

I certify that the above ordinance was received by me from the Mayor on this 15<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025.

**/s/CYNTHIA MALLETT, TOWN CLERK**

#### **GENERAL FUND**

##### **REVENUES:**

TAXES	1,251,750.00
LICENSES & PERMITS	255,500.00
GRANT REVENUE	376,000.00
FINES & FORFEITURES	700,000.00
INVESTMENT EARNINGS	135,000.00
POLICE DEPARTMENT	33,700.00
TRANSFERS & OTHER REVENUE	208,111.00
TOTAL GENERAL FUND REVENUE	2,960,061.00

##### **EXPENDITURES:**

ADMINISTRATION	721,137.00
POLICE	1,625,756.00
FIRE	187,411.00
COURT COSTS	270,031.00
MULTIPURPOSE CENTER	71,700.00
FIRE ADMIN	84,026.00
TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES	2,960,061.00
TOTAL GENERAL FUND	0.00

**SALES TAX - WATER IMPROVEMENT****REVENUES:**

TAXES	257,000.00
GRANT REVENUE	1,019,000.00
INVESTMENT EARNINGS	150,000.00
 TOTAL SALES TAX I REVENUES	 1,426,000.00

**EXPENDITURES:**

EXPENDITURES	494,763.00
TOTAL SALES TAX I EXPENDITURES	494,763.00
 TOTAL SALES TAX I	 931,237.00

**SALES TAX - PARKS & STREETS****REVENUES:**

TAXES	398,350.00
INVESTMENT EARNINGS	3,500.00
OTHER REVENUE	50,501.00
 TOTAL PARKS REVENUE	 452,351.00

**EXPENDITURES:**

EXPENDITURES	302,351.00
CAP. OUTLAY – BASEBALL FIELDS	150,000.00
 TOTAL SALES TAX PARKS EXPENDITURES	 452,351.00
 TOTAL SALES TAX - PARKS & STREETS	 0.00

**SALES TAX II STREETS****REVENUES:**

TAXES	668,200.00
GRANT REVENUE	415,528.00
INVESTMENT EARNINGS	35,000.00
OTHER REVENUE	392,677.00
 TOTAL SALES TAX II STREETS REVENUE	 1,511,405.00

**EXPENDITURES:**

EXPENDITURES	476,405.00
CAP. OUTLAY – STREETS	1,000,000.00
CAP. OUTLAY – SIDEWALKS	35,000.00
 TOTAL SALES TAX II STREETS EXP	 1,511,405.00
 TOTAL SALES TAX II STREETS	 0.00

**SALES TAX III****REVENUES:**

TAXES	514,000.00
GRANT REVENUE	181,472.00
EVENTS	1,000.00

INVESTMENT EARNINGS	25,000.00
TRANSFERS & OTHER REVENUE	234,815.00

TOTAL SALES TAX III REVENUE	956,287.00
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**EXPENDITURES:**

EXPENDITURES	281,287.00
CAP. OUTLAY – DRAINAGE	400,000.00
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	275,000.00
TOTAL SALES TAX III EXPENDITURES	956,287.00

TOTAL SALES TAX II STREETS	0.00
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**LACDBG**

**REVENUES:**

GRANT REVENUE	235,495.00
TRANSFERS & OTHER REVENUE	5,000.00

TOTAL LACDBG REVENUES	240,495.00
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**EXPENDITURES:**

CAP. OUTLAY – DEMOLITION	240,495.00
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TOTAL EXPENDITURES	240,495.00
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TOTAL LA CDBG	0.00
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**CITY WATER WORKS**

**REVENUES:**

GRANT REVENUE	714,204.00
CHARGES FOR SERVICES	1,620,000.00
INVESTMENT EARNINGS	28,000.00
TRANSFERS & OTHER REVENUE	493,263.00

TOTAL CITY WATER WORKS REVENUE	2,855,467.00
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**EXPENDITURES:**

WATER UTILITES EXPENDITURES	826,904.00
WASTE WATER MAINT EXPENDITURES	266,513.00
GARBAGE & TRASH EXPENDITURES	426,000.00
CAP. OUTLAY – WATER UTILITIES EXP	560,266.00
CAP OUTLAY – WASTEWATER MAINT EXP	775,784.00

TOTAL CITY WATER WORKS EXPENDITURES	2,855,467.00
TOTAL CITY WATER WORKS	0.00

With no further business to discuss, it was **moved by** Daniel Hennigan, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

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Douglas N Watkins, Mayor

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Cynthia Mallett, Town Clerk