

**Minutes
Public Hearing
115 N. Thomson, Iowa, LA 70647
May 12, 2025**

Mayor Douglas Watkins called a public hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. There was present, Mayor Watkins; Council Members Joe Becnel, Julie Fontenot, Gerald Guidry, and Vernessa Guillory; Town Attorney Eugene Bouquet; Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett; Chief of Police Keith Vincent; About 14 Citizens.

Mayor Watkins read the introduced Ordinance No. 2025-01, An Ordinance to amend Article V, Section 2-122 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, To Authorize the use of the Louisiana Department of Revenue Office of Debt Recovery for the Collection of Delinquent Debt, as Authorized by Louisiana Revised statutes 47:299.1 ET SEQ., and to provide for Related Matters. He asked if there were any questions or comments. There were no questions or comments. He asked Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett to give a brief overview of the ordinance. Cynthia Mallett explained, the purpose of amending the ordinance is to change the collection agency used to collect the debts owed to the Town of Iowa, from Louisiana Municipal Advisory and Technical Services Bureau Corporation Offset Claims Program to Louisiana Department of revenue Office of Debt Recovery. Council Member Julie Fontenot asked if there would be the same cost fees as LAMATS. Cynthia Mallett said yes, they will take a percentage for their fees. There were no further questions or comments. Public Hearing was closed at 7:02 pm.

**Regular Meeting
115 N. Thomson, Iowa, LA 70647
May 12, 2025**

Mayor Watkins and Town Council met in Regular session this date in compliance with all requirements as to notice. Mayor Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

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, and Vernessa Guillory; Absent was Council Member Daniel Hennigan. A quorum was established.

Others present were Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett; Town Attorney Eugene Bouquet; Chief of Police Keith Vincent and about 14 people.

It was **moved** by Julie Fontenot, **seconded** by Vernessa Guillory to amend the agenda to add, Motion to discuss the summer feeding program. The motion passed unanimously.

It was **moved** by Julie Fontenot, **seconded** by Joe Becnel to approve minutes as presented for regular meeting April 14, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins announced that we will have the discussion of the feeding program first before the new business agenda items.

Council Member Julie Fontenot said there were some people present with the summer feeding program. She said that the contract had not been signed as of last Friday. She said that it was

discussed a few months ago and the Council voted to sign the contract. She asked if the contract had been signed.

Mayor Watkins recognized three of the representatives with Calcasieu Parish Human Services and said that we spoke to these people about a month ago and discussed the program in totality. He recognized a special guest with Domingue and Szabo Engineering firm.

He announced that there was \$3,000.00 set aside in the budget for the summer feeding program. He said last year we amended the proposed budget and gave \$6500.00 in the budget and that is when it was discussed. Council Member Vernessa Guillory asked why we aren't budgeting \$6500.00? Mayor Watkins said \$3,000.00 is what we have in revenue dollars we can spend. Council Member Julie Fontenot asked which location are they going to cut out? There was discussion about the two locations and where the lunches would best be served from. Council Member Julie Fontenot said she was in favor of doing both locations again and adjust the budget again. Mayor Watkins announced that this program is a USDA federally sponsored program. He gave the dollars that it cost to operate the program and the municipality contributions. There were discussions about the amount of money to contribute to the program. Ms. Erika Garrison with Calcasieu Parish Human Services came forward. She said the contract needs to be signed soon because the program begins June 2nd. She presented information about the program. She clarified how the grant works and the grant match that is needed from other agencies. Mr. Erik Johnson came forward and talked about other municipalities cutting their contribution to the program. He talked about the number of meals served last year and said there was no reason that we should cut the budget for this program. Mayor Watkins announced that there was a 32.6% drop in number of meals served from the prior year.

It was **moved by** Julie Fontenot, seconded by Joe Becnel to adopt amended agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read Item one on the agenda and read the title of the proposed ordinance. It was **moved by** Julie Fontenot, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to approve Ordinance No. 2025-01. The motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE 2025 - 01

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ARTICLE V, SECTION 2-122 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE TOWN OF IOWA, LOUISIANA, TO AUTHORIZE THE USE OF THE LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE OFFICE OF DEBT RECOVERY FOR THE COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT DEBT, AS AUTHORIZED BY LOUISIANA REVISED STATUTES 47:299.1 ET SEQ., AND TO PROVIDE FOR RELATED MATTERS.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and the Iowa Town Council of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, that:

Section 1. Amendment

Article V, Section 2-122 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Iowa is hereby amended as follows:

Section 2-122. – Collection of Delinquent Debts.

Any charges levied herein which remain unpaid for 90 days past the due date shall be subject to collection through the Louisiana Department of Revenue, Office of Debt Recovery, utilizing the state tax refund offset and other available collection programs. Overdue charges will be offset from the individual income tax refund of the consumer. Should payment be collected through the Louisiana Department of Revenue's Office of Debt Recovery, a collection fee of twenty-five percent (25%) of the total debt will be added to the amount owed by the consumer, in addition to all other charges, interest, and penalties collected. Pursuant to L.R.S. 33:361, the agreement with the Louisiana Department of Revenue, Office of Debt Recovery for participation in the state tax refund offset and debt recovery program in the form attached hereto is approved, and the Mayor is authorized to execute it.

Section 2. Effective Date

This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption and publication as required by law.

Said Ordinance having been introduced on the 14th day of April, the title having been read, and appropriate public advertisement completed:

The above ordinance was adopted at a duly convened meeting on motion of Julie Fontenot, seconded by Vernessa Guillory, upon a vote taken as follows:

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Daniel Hennigan

ABSTAIN: None

WHEREUPON, the presiding officer declared the above Ordinance duly adopted on the 12th day of May, 2025.

DOUGLAS N. WATKINS, MAYOR

I certify that the above ordinance was presented to the Mayor by me on the 13th day of May, 2025.

CYNTHIA MALLETT, TOWN CLERK

I, acknowledge receipt of the above ordinance from the Town Clerk on this 13th day of May, 2025.

DOUGLAS N. WATKINS, MAYOR

I, hereby approve the above ordinance on this 13th day of May, 2025.

DOUGLAS N. WATKINS, MAYOR

I certify that the above ordinance was received by me from the Mayor on this 13th day of May, 2025.

CYNTHIA MALLETT, TOWN CLERK

Mayor Watkins read item two of the agenda and read Resolution 2025-05. There were no comments or questions. It was **moved** by Joe Becnel, **seconded** by Julie Fontenot to approve Resolution 2025-05. The motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2025-05

BE IT RESOLVED, that the following millage(s) are hereby levied on the 2025 tax roll on all property subject to taxation by Town of Iowa :

(Name of taxing district)

MILLAGE

General Alimony

5.590 mills

(Tax for: e.g. General Alimony, Library, Maintenance)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the proper administrative officials of the Parish of Calcasieu, State of Louisiana, be and they are hereby empowered, authorized, and directed to spread said taxes, as hereinabove set forth, upon the assessment roll of said Parish for the year 2025, and to make the collection of the taxes imposed for and on behalf of the taxing authority, according to law, and that the taxes herein levied shall become a permanent lien and privilege on all property subject to taxation as herein set forth, and collection thereof shall be enforceable in the manner provided by law.

The foregoing resolution was read in full; the roll was called on the adoption thereof, and the resolution was adopted by the following votes:

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

NAYS: None

ABSTAINED: None

ABSENT: Daniel Hennigan

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of the resolution adopted at the board meeting held on May 12, 2025, at which meeting a quorum was present and voting.

Iowa, Louisiana, this 12th day of May, 2025.
(City, Town, Village)

(Signature of authorized person of the taxing district)

Mayor Watkins announced that the next three items on the agenda were related. He read item three of the agenda. He explained how the purchase of this property is necessary to create the N Bowers evacuation route. It was **moved by Julie Fontenot, seconded by Vernessa Guillory** to approve ordering appraisal for property located at 613 Railroad Avenue for the development of N Bowers Avenue; and to enter into a purchase agreement for less than or lower than the appraised value of parcel and authorize Mayor Watkins to execute all documents in relation to purchase of 613 Railroad Avenue. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item four of the agenda. It was **moved by Vernessa Guillory, seconded by Julie Fontenot** to approve Resolution 2025-06. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor asked if there were any questions. There were no questions.

RESOLUTION 2025 - 06

A resolution requesting assistance and making application to the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury Road and Drainage Trust Fund for Participation in the cost of N Bowers Avenue Development Phase I Project for Town of Iowa, LA

WHEREAS, funding is needed to complete Phase I of this new collector street to connect W Miller Avenue to the southern part of the town and a bridge crossing west of Thomson Street and portions of Calcasieu Parish School Board Property and Town of Iowa; and

WHEREAS, funding of a portion of the cost needed in this phase has been committed by the Town of Iowa; and

WHEREAS, this new road will give daily and emergency access within the town and will improve student and family access to the Iowa High School and Middle School Campuses and improve connectivity for the entire town.

BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF IOWA, LOUISIANA, in regular session convened, that:

SECTION1: All of the above and foregoing is hereby made a part of this resolution.

SECTION 2: The Town Council of the Town of Iowa, Louisiana, does hereby request funding assistance and authorizes the Mayor of the Town of Iowa to make an application to the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury Road and Drainage Trust Fund for participation in the cost of N Bowers Avenue Phase I Project.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at Iowa, Louisiana, on this 12th day of May, 2025.

Douglas N Watkins, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Cynthia Mallett, MMC

Mayor Watkins read item five of the agenda. He said this agreement with Domingue, Szabo, & Associates is the same agreement that was approved before. It was **moved by Joe Becnel, seconded by Julie Fontenot**. To appoint Domingue, Szabo, & Associates for Engineering services for N Bowers Avenue Development Phase I Project with reference to as needed contract dated August 29, 2023. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item six of the agenda. He said that the surplus item listed as the 2021 pickup truck was listed because we leased one that operated on less gasoline, and we would be able to get a good resale value at this time. It was **moved by Julie Fontenot, seconded by Joe Becnel** to approve Resolution 2025-07. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 2025-07

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

Council Meeting Date: May 12, 2025

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) 2021 Ford Pickup VIN 1FTFW1E53MFB80371
- 2) 3 Ferris lawn mowers, 1 gravelly lawn mower, 1 kubota side by side
- 3) 2012 Ford F150 VIN 1FTFW1EF2CFA34924

2. 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 seven on the agenda. Introduction of 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. He said the budget message attached to the proposed budget is available with Town Clerk Cynthia Mallett. He read a budget summary. He asked if there were any questions. No questions were asked.

Mayor Watkins read item eight on the agenda. It was **moved by** Vernessa Guillory, **seconded by** Julie Fontenot to approve Resolution 2025-08. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 2025-08

A Resolution for reallocation of percentages for the
Town of Iowa's Sales Tax

WHEREAS, the citizens of Iowa approved the collection of a one cent sales tax for 1:
Capital and Other Improvements to Water Works, Sewer and Wastewater
Systems 2) Repair of the Town's Streets & Further Improvements to Park System
3) All Other lawful expenditures including Economic Development; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Iowa approved a collection of a one cent sales tax for 1)
Maintenance & Construction of Streets, Sidewalks, and Street Lighting. 2)
Maintenance & Construction of Sewerage Facilities, Systems, Pumps & Sewer
Lines 3) General Administration & General Fund; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Iowa approved the collection ½ cent sales tax for 1) Flood
Control Maintenance & Improvements 2) Economic Development Activities, 3)
Capital Improvements and Maintenance to the Town Hall and Town Park; and

WHEREAS, the Iowa Town Council has reviewed the needs of the town for the fiscal year
2025-2026 and deems it necessary to reallocate the percentages of the Below
allocated sales tax.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED by the Iowa Town Council of Iowa,
Louisiana:

The percentage of sales tax shall be as follows:

General Fund	28.5%	Sales Tax I	10%
Sales Tax Parks	15.5%	Sales Tax II	26%
Sales Tax III	20%		

PASSED AND APPROVED this 12th day of May, 2025.

ATTEST:

Cynthia Mallett, MMC

Mayor Watkins read item nine on the agenda. It was **moved by** Julie Fontenot, **seconded by** Vernessa Guillory to approve hiring McElroy, Quirk, & Burch to audit the financial activities of the Town of Iowa for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025 and to perform Agreed Upon Procedures report. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Watkins read item ten on the agenda, Introduction of Ordinance No 2025-02, An ordinance establishing for the adjustment of water and sewer bills due to municipal error, natural disaster, or pre-approved exceptional water usage, and otherwise to provide with respect thereto. Mayor Watkins asked if there were any questions. He explained the purpose of this ordinance is to grant the town the ability to adjust the metered water/sewer usage in cases of disasters or municipal error.

Mayor Watkins read item eleven on the agenda and recognized Chief Vincent to come forward. Chief Vincent came forward and announced the Iowa Police Memorial Service will be held May 15, 2025, at 5:00pm at the Iowa Community Center. He invited everyone to attend and announced that Calcasieu Parish District Attorney Dwight will be the guest speaker. Chief Vincent requested that he be allowed to speak at the next council meeting in reference to the police department's proposed budget and make recommendations for promotions.

Mayor Watkins announced that copies of the financials are available.

With no further business to discuss, it was **moved by** Joe Becnel, **seconded by** Daniel Hennigan, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45pm.

Douglas N Watkins, Mayor

Cynthia Mallett, MMC

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 June 9, 2025 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 2025-02

An Ordinance establishing for the adjustment of water and sewer bills due to municipal error, natural disaster, or pre-approved exceptional water usage, and otherwise to provide with respect thereto

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

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.
