

Council Vice President Fielkow Continues Fight To Increase City Contract Transparency

News Release

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New Orleans
City Council

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New Orleans, LA - April 22, 2009 -


At tomorrow's regular City Council meeting, Council Vice President Fielkow will introduce a Resolution that urges the Administration, pursuant to the Home Rule Charter, to require full disclosure of all subcontractors and individuals having a financial interest in any professional services contracts with the City. The Resolution further calls on the Louisiana State Legislature to enact legislation requiring full disclosure of all subcontractors and individuals having a financial interest in any contracts issued pursuant to state public bid laws.

"It is in the best interests of our citizens to know who is performing work on behalf of their government. With resources so tight right now, it is important to account for every dollar spent in our city," says Fielkow.

"Subcontractors should be able to withstand the same level of public scrutiny as primary contractors, and the public would be well-served by knowing the identity of all subcontractors involved in city contracts. This Resolution broadens the public transparency already required by all contractors doing business with the City Council to cover the entire city government."

This Resolution, R-09-181, broadens the scope of Resolution R-05-H which was unanimously passed by the City Council after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. That Resolution, R-05-H, required that all individuals and entities receiving a contract from the City of New Orleans related to the rebuilding of New Orleans must certify the identity of all individuals and entities with a financial interest in the contract, including all subcontractors, consultants and finder's fees incurred, paid or promised. The certification had to be made to the City before the contract could be executed.

The New Orleans City Council, led by Councilman Fielkow, has already adopted Rule 45 of its Rules and Regulations



providing for the full disclosure of any individuals or entities involved in work on City Council-issued contracts. This new Resolution, R-09-181, requests that the City of New Orleans adhere to this same standard of transparency, and broaden the scope of the original Resolution to include ALL contracts with the City, not just those pertaining to rebuilding.

Additionally, R-09-181 seeks to equalize the disclosure requirements for all contractors and subcontractors holding city contracts. Under current city law, excluding City Council contracts, only Disadvantage Business Enterprises (DBE's) subcontractors are required to be disclosed, while non-DBE's are not subject to general disclosure requirements. This results in inequitable disclosure practices for DBE's.

"Every enterprise seeking to do business with the City of New Orleans should be held to the same standards. It is inequitable that we are holding minority- and women-owned businesses to a higher degree of scrutiny," adds Fielkow. "The playing field needs to be equalized so that every contractor and subcontractor is held to the same standards."

Councilman Fielkow plans to introduce R-09-181 during tomorrow's City Council meeting.

New Orleans City Council

The New Orleans City Council is the legislative branch of New Orleans city government. The Council considers and enacts all local laws that govern the City of New Orleans. The Council also approves the operating and capital budgets for the City, as recommended by the mayor, and continually monitors revenues and expenditures for local government operations. The City Council is also the regulatory body for public utilities. It also reviews and has final say on many land use and zoning matters, as well as considers major economic development projects for the City. As a Board of Review for Orleans Parish, the Council examines appeals of property tax assessments for real estate taxes, and certifies tax rolls to the Louisiana Tax Commission. Other responsibilities of the Council include overseeing the operation of the public access television in Orleans Parish.

The City Council is comprised of five districts and two councilmembers-at-large. Council President and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; Council Vice-President and Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow; District "A" Councilmember Shelley Midura; District "B" Councilmember Stacy S. Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.