

**City Council Budget Committee  
Receives Report on City Hall Repair Costs  
And Addresses Orleans Parish Sheriff's Department Budget**

News Release

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*Councilmember Hedge-Morrell*

New Orleans, LA - July 29, 2009 - The New Orleans City Council Budget Committee met this afternoon at 2 p.m. in the Council Chamber. One of the agenda highlights was a report on the cost of immediate repairs and replacements needed at City Hall, presented by Cynthia Sylvain-Lear, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, and William Chrisman, Director of Capital Projects.

According to the report, \$9,650,000 is needed immediately to fund such projects as a new roof, and new boilers. Another \$9 million is estimated to be needed by the end of the year. A further \$21 million is forecast for ongoing needs, the bulk of which is slated for asbestos abatement, bringing the total needed to approximately \$39,785,000.

District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell, Chair of the Budget Committee, said, "We need to provide a safe workplace for our city workers. This money won't be spent on plush offices or upgrades, it's just to make the building usable for the next 20 years."

Also on the agenda was a presentation from Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff Marlin Gusman, who reported that the Sheriff's department is facing a critical budget shortfall. According to the Sheriff, his department will run out of funds in August, forcing the courts to cut hours and services unless additional funding is found.

Councilmember Hedge-Morrell stated, "We need to keep the courts working.

If we don't get defendants to trial quickly, we incur even more costs in housing them longer. The Council will work to find a way to fund the continued operation of the Sheriff's Department. We can't afford, from a public safety standpoint, to do anything less."

## 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 Arnie Fielkow; Council Vice President and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; 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.