

## City Council Holds Executive Session, Authorizes Action to Expedite Responses To Pending Public Records Requests

News Release

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New Orleans, LA - March 20, 2009 - Yesterday as part of its regular meeting, the City Council held an Executive Session to address pending litigation and the possible creation of an independent Management Information Services system for the Council. Due to the confidentiality of both issues, they were taken up in Executive Session closed to the

public.

### *Pending Litigation*

Special Counsel informed the City Council as to the current status of the pending litigation Case #09-2279, Civil District Court for the Parish of Orleans, City Council versus Tracie Washington and the Louisiana Justice Institute, including Judge Medley's order that defendants provide the court with the names of the individuals to whom defendants sent emails that might contain privileged information.

### *Independent Management Information Services System*

Councilmembers consulted with Barb Frederiksen, Senior Managing Consultant of Johnson Laird, Inc. about the development of a program that would better enable the City Council to access its emails and to respond more quickly to public records requests.

Related to the Executive Session and immediately following, Attorney Steve Lane of Herman, Herman, Katz & Cotlar, Special Counsel for the City Council, stated that the Council has authorized action to expedite responses to current pending public records requests, further enhancing accountability to the public.

Rather than wait for the Mayor's Office of Technology to locate documents, Councilmembers have taken it upon themselves to review their emails. The Council will determine what can be made available as soon as possible for public review. Councilmembers will consult with nationally renowned technology expert Barb Frederiksen for advice and assistance.

Further notice will be posted as the Council continues its efforts to meet the public's requests.

### **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.