



Council Criminal Justice Committee To Receive Initial Quarterly Report From Criminal Justice Leadership Alliance

News Release

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New Orleans, LA - December 11, 2007 - On Wednesday, December 12, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. in the City Council Chamber, the Criminal Justice Committee of the City Council will receive the first Quarterly Report from the Criminal Justice Leadership Alliance documenting the progress made thus far in the implementation of the recommendations of the Vera Institute of Justice. Confirmed representatives from the criminal justice system include Criminal Sheriff Marlin Gusman, Orleans Parish Criminal Court Judge Calvin Johnson, Acting District Attorney Keva Landrum-Johnson and City Attorney Penya Moses-Fields.

Established in the fall of 2007, the Criminal Justice Leadership Alliance is working to rebuild a criminal justice system that incorporates and advances the recommendations of the Vera Institute of Justice, based on research and data collected over a six-month period of study of New Orleans's criminal justice system. The work of the Alliance to date has been made possible through the generous support of Baptist Community Ministries and the New Orleans City Council.

This information is among the most anticipated and important information to be received this year by the City Council. "This Alliance is historic," said Councilmember James Carter, Chair of the Criminal Justice Committee. "Leaders from every criminal justice agency have signed a statement of commitment to work collectively to implement best practices to make our city safer."

This Quarterly Report will include information on alternative sanctions for low-level offenders and municipal court reforms, along with statements from key stakeholders in the criminal justice system. "Our goal is an accountable, just, transparent and efficient criminal justice system," said Carter, "one that will serve as a model for other cities."

The Criminal Justice Committee will also hear from Darlene Cusanza, Executive Director of Crimestoppers. She will update the Committee on programs and progress made by Crimestoppers during 2007. Crimestoppers works in cooperation with local law enforcement, media and the public to "reduce crime by the identification and apprehension of perpetrators of felony crimes through anonymous information provided for financial reward purposes over a telephone hotline by informants who remain permanently anonymous." Since 1981, Crimestoppers has assisted law enforcement in solving over 6,000 crimes in the Greater New Orleans metropolitan area.

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.