



## City Council December 1, 2008 Regular Meeting Summary

News Release

December 1, 2008

**New Orleans, LA - December 1, 2008** - Today, the New Orleans City Council adopted the 2009 Capital and Operating Budgets for the City of New Orleans and unanimously rejected the 10-mill property tax increase proposed by Mayor Ray Nagin.

Among the areas addressed by budget amendment were; elimination of the Office of Municipal Investigation, reduction of the crime camera program, reserving 50% of the City's Sanitation Department Budget and funding of the District Attorney and Public Defender Offices.



Councilmember at Large  
Clarkson

Council President Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson said, "Our most important goal today was to pass a balanced budget, to continue to fund our city's recovery without placing an increased tax burden on our citizens. I'm pleased to say we accomplished that."

Council Budget Chairman Cynthia Hedge-Morrell added, "The Council was unified in its desire to not raise taxes. It was important that we not roll the millage forward and that we make the best financial decisions possible for the citizens of New Orleans."



Councilmember Hedge-Morrell



Councilmember at-Large  
Fielkow

“The budget for 2009 is the result of tough decisions that were made in order to responsibly and progressively move this city forward. While we could not fund everything at the levels we would like given economic realities, I feel confident that sensible solutions were reached,” said Council Vice President Arnie Fielkow.

### ***Amendments to the Budget***

Among the amendments made to the Budget; use the remaining \$10 million in Community Disaster Loan money received from the Federal Government following Hurricane Katrina; eliminate duplication of services by not funding the Office of Municipal Investigation based on the Inspector General's assertion that the functions of OMI can be assumed by the Inspector General's Office.

The Council also voted to reduce the Operating Expenses of the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) by just over \$1 million. The money, previously reserved for the crime camera program, will be transferred to the District Attorney's office. The District Attorney's office also received a budget increase. The increase included \$1.2 million for personnel and \$250,000 for diversionary programs.

Council Budget Chair Hedge-Morrell confirmed that a portion of the money will remain in the budget to repair the crime cameras ruined by Hurricane Gustav, stating that the transfer of money to the District Attorney's office is a more practical application of the money and will assist in making the city safer for all New Orleanians.

The Public Defenders Office was funded by reducing the following CAO budget items: equipment maintenance by \$500,000, fuel reduction costs not to affect First Responders by \$800,000 and the budget consultant firm services by \$500,000.

Also appropriated was \$97,000 to Juvenile Court for funding of law clerks.

The Council, addressing the City's Department of Sanitation Budget, voted to reserve 50% (\$20.5 million) of the department's budget until the Council is satisfied that the solid waste contracts are in compliance.

### ***Approves Extension of Suspension of Domicile Requirement***

In other business, the Council passed Ordinance Calendar No. 27,261, co-authored by Councilmembers Hedge-Morrell, Fielkow, Head and Clarkson, extending the suspension of the domicile requirement for City employees. The suspension of the domicile requirement will be effective until December 31, 2012 or until it is withdrawn, whichever should occur first. The reinstatement of the requirement will not affect any City employee hired prior to December 31, 2012.

### **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.