

City Council October 2, 2008
Regular Meeting Summary

News Release

October 2, 2008

Contact:

Ronald J. Pursell
Council Chief of Staff
Ph: (504) 658-1082

rjpursell@cityofno.com

[New Orleans
City Council](#)

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New Orleans, LA - October 2, 2008 - Today the New Orleans City Council passed a Motion approving pay raises for fire fighter classifications, Resolutions supporting tax credits for property storm protection and evacuation expenses, and an Ordinance permitting the installation of alternative playground surfacing to prevent delays in rebuilding City playgrounds.

The Council also honored those whose efforts led to the successful evacuation of the City during Hurricane Gustav and addressed a presentation on the demolition process in the City.

Approves Pay Raises for Fire Fighter Classifications



Councilmember Hedge-Morrell

Led by Budget Committee Chair District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell, the Council passed Motion M-08-363 approving pay raises for each classification of fire fighters to ensure that all fire fighters are paid at or above the southern average.

Councilmember Hedge-Morrell said, "We have been working towards placing our fire fighters' pay at the southern average, and we are pleased to have finally reached that goal with our fire

department as we did for our first responders."

The Motion approves pay raises for each classification of fire fighters. All fire fighters who currently are not paid at the calculated southern average will receive a ten percent (10%) increase to the minimum base salary. If any of the fire fighters' salaries are still below the proposed increases, they would receive an additional increase in base pay that will place them at the Civil Service Commission's calculated southern average for their job classification.



Supports Tax Credits for Property Storm Protection and Evacuation Expenses

The Council adopted Resolutions R-08-560 and R-08-561, spearheaded by Councilmember Fielkow and co-authored by Councilmembers Clarkson and Head, supporting state and federal tax credits for commercial and residential property owners to employ storm-proofing technologies on their structures, and for expenses incurred while under mandatory evacuation orders.

Resolution R-08-560 reflects the Council's belief that the establishment of these tax credits will encourage more widespread use of storm-proofing measures which may reduce the need for state and federal government post-disaster assistance and enhance the community's ability to reestablish its residential and economic base after a major storm.

Resolution R-08-561 cites the fact that the current FEMA reimbursement policy may provide a disincentive to the public to evacuate due to inability to afford evacuation expenses.

Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow said, "We understand the expenses associated with evacuating as well as storm-proofing a structure, and as a government body, we want to create an environment that encourages citizens to take actions in the interests of their safety and well being."



Head of EMS Dr. Juliette Saussy, Colonel Jerry Sneed, Fire Chief Charles Parent, Police Chief Warren Riley

Honors First Responders of Hurricane Gustav

The Council, as its first order of business, honored the "Unsung Heroes of Gustav" whose efforts led to the successful evacuation of the City during Hurricane Gustav.

The honorees included: Colonel Jerry Sneed of the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, Cesar Burgos and Mark Major of the Regional Transit Authority, Marcia St. Martin of the Sewerage and Water Board, Harrison Boyd of the Mayor's Office of Technology, Police Chief Warren Riley, Fire Chief Charles Parent, Head of EMS Dr. Juliette Saussy, and Dr. Kevin Stephens of the Public Health Department.

Council President Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson said, "You all set a pattern for the rest of America on how to perform in a crisis and we can't thank you enough for your courageous leadership. We are thankful to have such dedicated professionals working for our City and our citizens."

Supports Rebuilding of City Playgrounds



Councilmember-at-Large
Fielkow

The Council passed Ordinance Calendar No. 27,161, authored by Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow, permitting the installation of alternative playground surfacing other than rubber surfacing, as long as it complies with state and federally approved requirements.

The Ordinance reflects the Council's belief that being able to use a less expensive alternative to rubber would allow the City to move forward in more quickly rebuilding New Orleans playgrounds.

Councilmember Fielkow said, "It is important that we take the necessary steps to assist in the rebuilding of the City's playgrounds and recreational areas. We want to ensure that all playgrounds are safe and open for use by the public. This legislation gives the City flexibility when choosing playground rebuilding materials, while also ensuring that our City playgrounds comply with state and federal safety standards."



Representatives from the Dept. of Sanitation,
Office of Recovery Development & Administration,
Dept. of Safety & Permits and the Code Enforcement Division

Addresses City's Demolition Process

Representatives from the Department of Safety and Permits, Department of Sanitation, Office of Recovery Development and Administration and the Code Enforcement Division came before the Council

today to give a presentation on the City's demolition processes.

The representatives discussed aspects of the demolition process including coordination among departments, demolition classifications and timelines for demolition.

Housing and Human Needs Committee Chair District "B" Councilmember Stacy Head said, "I want to thank you all for being here today to discuss this important issue with us. We want to ensure that the demolition process is as organized and efficient as possible to assure homeowners that properties in imminent danger of collapse will be demolished in a timely manner."

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.