

City Council April 2, 2009
Regular Meeting Summary

News Release

April 2, 2009

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[New Orleans
City Council](#)

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New Orleans, LA - April 2, 2009 - Today, the New Orleans City Council passed Resolutions approving the Entergy New Orleans rate case settlement and called for expedited funding of the Orleans Public Defenders Office.

Additionally the Council passed Resolutions calling for review of the Army Corps of Engineers' plans for the redesign of New Orleans outfall canals, urging the State to reconsider its decision to reject federal health care stimulus money, and urging Governor Jindal to reconsider the plan to close in-patient services at the New Orleans Adolescent Hospital.

The Council also celebrated Navy Day and addressed a presentation on the Gun Buy Back Program.

Celebrated Navy Day



Captain Harrison and General Mize

Captain Brian Harrison came before the Council today to be honored as a part of the Navy Day celebration. Captain Harrison is the last Commander of the Naval Support Station here in New Orleans.

Also present in the Chamber to be honored were numerous Navy personnel, along with the Navy band, and General David Mize USMC Ret was present to show his support for Captain

Harrison and his work.

The Council presented a proclamation to Captain Harrison in recognition of his years of service and his accomplishments throughout his career.

Councilmembers expressed their gratitude to Captain Harrison and all Naval personnel present for their dedication and commitment to the City.



Commander Huynh and Members of Vietnamese Military Academy in Louisiana

Commander Quan H. Huynh of the Vietnamese Military Academy in Louisiana and academy members also came before the Council to receive a proclamation honoring them for their service and dedication to New Orleans.

Supported Gun Buy Back Program



Greater New Orleans Gun Buy Back Committee Members and NOPD Chief Riley

Members of the Greater New Orleans Gun Buy Back Committee, along with New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) Chief Warren Riley, came before the Council today to discuss the details of this year's Gun Buy Back program.

This year's program will feature presentations on gun safety, training and awareness, and a benefit

concert held at First Pilgrim Baptist Church located at 1234 Arts Street at 7 p.m. on Friday April 3rd.

The Gun Buy Back program will occur on Saturday, April 4th beginning at 9 a. m. at Little Zion Baptist Church Multi-Purpose Center located at 4821 Earhart Blvd.

The program is dedicated to decreasing the number of guns on the street and will provide \$50 for each gun and \$200 for each assault weapon turned in, no questions asked.

Councilmember James Carter said, "The Gun Buy Back program works to decrease violent crime in New Orleans by reducing the number of guns on our streets and providing training and information on gun safety. This program is an excellent collaborative effort among community members,

businesses, crime fighting initiatives and the New Orleans Police Department, and we are grateful for all of their hard work and dedication to making our City a safer place."

The Gun Buy Back program has helped to remove more than 1,000 guns from the streets over the last six years.

Addressed Entergy Rate Case Settlement



Councilmember Midura

The Council passed Resolution R-09-136, approving a legal settlement between the City Council and Entergy New Orleans, Inc.

The legal settlement will decrease Entergy utility rates by \$30 million for Entergy New Orleans ratepayers and includes an agreement by Entergy New Orleans, Inc. to fund Energy Smart, a citywide energy efficiency financing program.

The Council also passed Resolution R-09-137, ratifying a gas hedging plan to manage power costs during peak usage periods, as part of the Entergy New Orleans, Inc. rate case settlement.

Utility Committee Chair Councilmember Shelley Midura said, "This settlement will benefit our citizens and our City - decreasing utility costs and promoting a responsible energy plan. Energy Smart is a proactive approach to energy efficiency in our City and funding is critical to ensure that our City sees the benefits of this program in the near future."

Addressed Army Corps of Engineers Decision on Outfall Canals



Lisa Ludwig, Tom Capella, David Waggoner and Robert Jackson

The Council passed Resolution R-09-147, authored by Councilmember Clarkson, calling upon the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to submit its plans and cost estimates for the redesign of New Orleans' outfall canals to

independent, third-party review.

The resolution also supports a congressional field hearing in New Orleans by the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works to further investigate the Corps' proposed redesign.

Present at the meeting to further explain the issue were: Robert Jackson,

Spokesman for the Sewerage and Water Board; Tom Capella, Jefferson Parish Councilman-at-Large; David Waggoner, architect with Waggoner and Ball, a firm involved with post-Katrina city planning; and Lisa Ludwig, Executive Director of Pump to the River.

In redesigning the London Ave., Orleans Ave., and 17th St. canals, the Corps favors "Option 1" - which would retain existing deficient canal walls, build new pumping stations at the mouth of each canal, and rely on Sewerage and Water Board pumping stations to handle routine drainage. The Corps estimates this plan will cost \$800 million.

A proposed "Option 2," which the Corps has rejected as too costly, would involve the deepening and repaving of canal walls and the construction of new all-purpose pumping stations at each of these canals to handle both rising and falling water. The Corps estimates this plan will cost \$3.4 billion.

Council President Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson said, "I am concerned that Option 1 will provide insufficient protection if we have major rainfall accompanied by a significant rise in water levels within the canals, which we all know is common during major storms."

Click [here](#) to view a News Release on this legislation.

Called for Expedited Funding of Orleans Public Defenders



***Christopher Flood,
Orleans Public Defenders
Office***

The Council passed Resolution R-09-149, authored by Councilmember Clarkson, calling upon the Mayor's Office to expend the funds as allocated by the City Council to the Orleans Parish Defenders Office expeditiously.

The Council budgeted \$600,000 of the City's Operating Budget to the Orleans Parish Public Defenders - the Public Defenders Office has yet to receive these funds.

Council President Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson said, "Fully funding the Public Defender's Office is about ensuring the entire criminal justice system is able to function effectively. We cannot prosecute crimes without a functioning defense office. It's that simple."

She continued, "The Council allocated funds to the office in our original budget ordinance. That Ordinance is law, and the Mayor is bound to respect it and disperse the funds as we intended."

Urged State to Reconsider Rejection of Federal Health Care Stimulus Dollars



Councilmember-at-Large
Fielkow

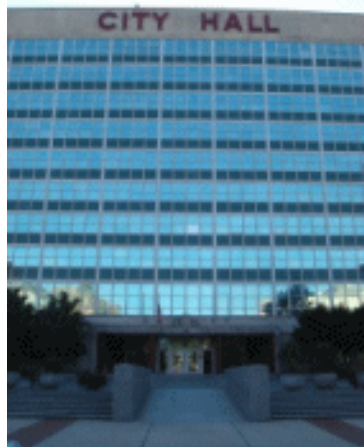
The Council passed Resolution R-09-155, introduced by Councilmember Fielkow, urging Governor Jindal and Louisiana Secretary of Health and Hospitals Alan Levine to reconsider their plan to reject millions of dollars in federal stimulus package funds designed to provide health benefits to Louisiana's poor, underinsured and uninsured.

The Resolution also calls for the State to hold public meetings on this issue in New Orleans and throughout Louisiana, enabling State policy makers to hear first-hand the impact that such actions will have on health care in Orleans Parish and the rest of the State.

Council Vice President Arnie Fielkow said, "In New Orleans alone, we still have no hospital in the East, the potential new LSU/VA complex is years from completion and we are struggling with a hurting population that has limited access to affordable health care. While I understand the budget challenges faced by the State, the rejection of helpful federal dollars to support this struggling health care system is not a path we should follow."

Click [here](#) to view a News Release on this legislation.

Addressed Governor's Plan to Close New Orleans Adolescent Hospital



The Council passed Resolution R-09-153, introduced by Councilmember Fielkow, urging the Governor of Louisiana, Bobby Jindal, to reconsider the plan to close in-patient services at the New Orleans Adolescent Hospital (NOAH) and relocate them outside of Orleans Parish.

The Resolution also requests that any plan going forward with respect to the closure of the New Orleans Adolescent Hospital be made in consultation with the affected populations of the plan, and that public meetings be held in New Orleans regarding the State plan, thus enabling State policy makers to hear first-hand the impact that such actions will have on mental health services in Orleans Parish.

Council Vice President Arnie Fielkow said, "NOAH provides critical mental health services to a population of citizens that have limited access to comprehensive treatment. It is vital that we make these services accessible to all of our citizens and that we engage in conversations with the public

relative to the plans for NOAH moving forward."

New Orleans Adolescent Hospital is the only public sector facility in New Orleans to provide comprehensive inpatient and outpatient services for children and adolescents.

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.

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