

Council Vice President Fielkow's Legislation  
Ensuring More Transparent City Contract Competitive Selection Process  
To Come Up for Vote at Tomorrow's Council Meeting

*Legislation Requires Mayor and Council Professional Services Contracting Process  
To be Subject to State Open Meetings Law*

News Release

February 4, 2009

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New Orleans, LA - February 4, 2009 - Tomorrow, at the regular City Council meeting, Council Vice President Arnie Fielkow's legislation to ensure that the city's competitive selection process for professional service contracts is subject to Louisiana's Open Meetings Law will come up for final vote. The legislation calls for further openness and transparency by both the Executive and Legislative branches of City Government.

Council Vice President Fielkow said, "Any time we talk about awarding public dollars for city contracted services, it should be done in a totally open process to the public. Unfortunately, this has not been the case for the professional services contracting process in New Orleans city government. My legislation calls for the City of New Orleans to embrace transparency and openness in its contracting processes and make this process subject to the required Louisiana Open Meetings Law."

The two pieces of legislation to be voted on tomorrow are:

- An Ordinance requiring that the Executive Branch of City Government, through its professional service contracting process, comply with the Louisiana Open Meetings Law
- A Motion which mandates that the City Council, in its professional service contracting process, also fully comply with the Louisiana Open Meetings Law

The legislation was originally introduced and endorsed by the Council's Governmental Affairs Committee on July 7, 2008. The Louisiana Attorney General, prompted by a request from the Council, rendered an advisory opinion that meetings involving the awarding of professional services contracts are indeed subject to the Louisiana Open Meetings Law. See the Louisiana Attorney General's advisory opinion in full [here](#).

Mayor Nagin's Administration requested a reconsideration by the Attorney General of his advisory opinion in late October 2008. On January 9, 2009 the Louisiana Attorney General reaffirmed its original opinion. See the Louisiana Attorney General's reaffirmed opinion in full [here](#).

Fielkow added, "New Orleans is making great strides towards further openness and efficiency in city government. However, every public dollar the City spends must be accounted for and citizens deserve to know where their money is being spent. This legislation is simply another incremental step towards ensuring greater operational transparency for the benefit of all citizens of New Orleans."

The Bureau of Government Research (BGR), the New Orleans Office of Inspector General (OIG), Mayor Nagin's "Bring New Orleans Back" Commission and "Forward New Orleans: A Set of Principles" from the New Orleans Business Council have all repeatedly called for a standardized and transparent professional services contracting process in New Orleans. Council Vice President Fielkow's legislation directly addresses the concerns and wishes of good government and citizen groups.

### 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.