

4th Circuit Court of Appeal Overrules Orleans Civil District Court
Allows City Councilmember Emails in Possession
Of Lawyer Tracie Washington Made Public

News Release

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City Council](#)

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New Orleans, LA - May 12, 2009 - Today, a decision by Louisiana's Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal overruled the Orleans Civil District Court to allow Tracie Washington to make public non-privileged City Councilmember emails in her possession.

The decision cited that the documents had already been produced and viewed in the public arena for approximately three months prior to the granting of the injunction by the lower court, and accordingly held that the lower court injunction must be lifted.

Further, the Court indicated that the lawyers code of ethics requires that Ms. Washington not release any Councilmember emails that might contain privileged or confidential information. The Court also noted that there might be an issue as to whether the process by which the emails were released constituted civil malfeasance or criminal behavior on the part of those involved in their release.

Attorney for the City Council Steve Lane is reviewing the Court's decision and expects to discuss with Councilmembers what if any action should be taken.

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.