

**CITY COUNCIL RESEARCH DIVISION  
LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY**



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**Bill Type and Number:** Ordinance 2020-626

**Introducer/Sponsor(s):** Council President at the request of the Office of General Counsel

**Date of Introduction:** October 13, 2020

**Committee(s) of Reference:** F

**Date of Analysis:** October 15, 2020

**Type of Action:** Appropriation

**Bill Summary:** The bill appropriates \$250,000 from the Office of General Counsel Contingency Fund account to the Ancillary Legal Fees account to provide funding for the reimbursement of legal fees private attorneys hired by City employees and officials to represent them in legal matters arising from their roles as City officials.

**Background Information:** As explained to the Special Investigatory Committee on JEA, there is a common law right for public officials and employees to have their reasonable legal defense fees paid by the government should they be sued or investigated as a result of actions undertaken in the course of their official duties, provided they are exonerated of charges or found to be not guilty of any malfeasance. Because a substantial number of City and JEA employees and officials are currently involved in the several local, state and federal investigations revolving around the proposed privatization of JEA, a number of those employees and officials have hired private counsel to represent them, some invoices for those services have begun to be submitted, and additional invoices are anticipated to be received in the future as the investigations proceed. This bill allocates funding from an OGC contingency account to the Ancillary Legal Fees account from which such private representation bills would be paid if and when finally authorized.

**Policy Impact Area:** Legal fee reimbursement

**Fiscal Impact:** The bill appropriates \$250,000 from a contingency account to an account from which legal invoices could be paid.

**Analyst:** Clements