

# Warren to announce Orange mayoral bid

By Chris Sykes  
Staff Writer

A prospective opponent to Orange Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr. plans to kick off his campaign tonight during an event inside a city restaurant.

Attorney Dwayne Warren said he plans to be one of at least four candidates for the mayor's position in the May 8 election.

"I am launching my campaign for mayor to give the people of Orange a candidate who is fully committed to representing the best interests of the citizens and to restoring confidence in government's ability to deliver responsible leadership that will give this great city the best opportunity for growth, prosperity and safety," said Warren, who serves as the legislative research officer for the Orange City Council.

Joining Warren on his ticket are At Large Councilman Elroy A. Corbitt, an finance professional; April Gaunt-Butler, an early childhood educator; and Dwight Holmes, another educator.

Warren, 45, was a municipal court judge during the administration of former Mayor Mims Hackett. He said he brings 20 years of experience in representing governmental entities and more than 10 years of involvement in civic and judicial affairs in Orange.

That's why, Warren said, he believes he is the right man to oppose Hawkins. He said that the current mayor is "consumed by

misdirected personal ambitions under the guise of so-called responsible leadership." Warren said that at times during Hawkins' 3 1/2 years in office, he has named himself acting police chief, fire director, emergency management coordinator and chief of the auxiliary police. Hawkins was forced from the fire director's position with its accompanying salary.

Regarding quality-of-life issues, Warren said Orange's residents deserve a city where they can feel safe. He said despite Hawkins' law-enforcement background as a former West Orange police officer, he has failed to improve public safety in the city.

"Under Mayor Hawkins' leadership, Orange has become the 10th most dangerous city in the state of New Jersey, according to the FBI and the Essex County Prosecutor's Office statistics," Warren said. "Crime in our city has taken a dramatic turn for the worst, with eight homicides in 2011."

Concerning fiscal issues, Warren said the Hawkins administration has mismanaged Orange's finance. That, he continued, has led to four unnecessarily extended and complicated budget processes and the city's taxpayers have had to pay the price for it. Warren said he will make preparing the budget in a timely manner and balancing it without overburdening taxpayers his first priority.

*Managing Editor John Zucal contributed to this article.*