

Mayor assisted Marable

By Chris Sykes

Staff Writer

While finance reports from a local political action committee did not show it, giving the appearance he did not receive assistance, recently announced mayoral candidate Edward Marable did get financial support from Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr. and a related PAC to help with his City Council re-election campaign.

According to Marable's campaign-finance records available through the N.J. Election Law Enforcement Commission, Marable appears to have had more ties to Hawkins than simply receiving his endorsement for his South Ward re-election bid last year. Hawkins has not stated if he will seek re-election.

Marable's election fund received a check for \$399.20, drafted on May 5, 2010 from the Committee to Elect Eldridge Hawkins Jr. It was listed on Hawkins' July 15 report. The campaign fund also received two contributions from the Orange Essex Revitalization PAC, which was formed by Hawkins' mother, Linda Cofer. Two payments, each for \$2,294.08, were made on April 29 and May 5. They were listed, respectively, on Marable's May 1 and June 1 reports.

The contributions refute past comments which were made by several supporters, but not Marable, that Hawkins' endorsement was the only form of support Marable received.

"I think it has been represented in the past in a way that it may have led to the confusion," said Marable. "Every single dollar is noted on my campaign reports."

Marable also said his acceptance of the contributions came under one condition: "It was prefaced that there would be nothing in return, that I would not take any particular position in any matter."

Marable announced in a press release last week that he planned a run for mayor in the May 2012 election. Marable said he wanted to announce early because he believed it would give him a strategic advantage over his eventual opponents.

"While others are standing around waiting to see what is going to happen, I propose an alternative now," said Marable. "Orange residents are on the verge of losing hope. They need to know, at the earliest possible date, that there is an exit strategy out of the wilderness."

Once news of Marable's bid to replace Hawkins in 2012 spread, he received an enthusiastic endorsement from one of his current peers on the City Council.

"Hey, everyone, 2012 is an important year for our nation and the residents of Orange," At Large Councilwoman Donna K. Williams wrote in a comment posted on her Facebook page. "I am asking that you take the time and get to know Edward Marable."

Managing Editor John Zucal contributed to this article.