

Meeting Minutes

City Council Work Session

August 23, 2021 | 5:00 p.m.
Council Chambers Conference Room
88 E. Chicago St., Chandler, AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kevin Hartke at 4:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Council Attendance

Mayor Kevin Hartke
Vice Mayor Mark Stewart
Councilmember OD Harris
Councilmember Terry Roe
Councilmember René Lopez
Councilmember Christine Ellis
Councilmember Matt Orlando

Appointee Attendance

Josh Wright, City Manager
Debra Stapleton, Assistant City Manager
Kelly Schwab, City Attorney
Dana DeLong, City Clerk

Staff in Attendance

Matt Burdick, Communications and Public Affairs Director
Alexis Apodaca, Governmental Relations Coordinator
Cori Harris, Mayor and Council Communications Manager

Discussion

1. Presentation and discussion of the Mobile Voting Pilot Program.

MAYOR HARTKE called for a staff presentation.

DANA DeLONG, City Clerk, presented the following presentation.

- Agenda
- Mobile Voting Pilot Program
 - The City is exploring a mobile voting pilot program utilizing blockchain technology that offers a secure method of voting and enables citizens to vote from anywhere.
- Goal of the Mobile Voting Pilot Program

- Successfully conduct a mobile voting pilot utilizing advances in electronic ballot delivery and return
- Demonstrate a full audit of the pilot election results with a final report presented to Council.
- How Mobile Voting Works
 - 1 - Verify your device
 - Remote Identity Verification
 - 2 - Verify your identity
 - Biometrics
 - 3 - Access Ballot and Vote
 - Blockchain
- Voatz Product Features
 - Military Grade Security
 - Data encryption and voting standards in use for overseas and military voters (biometrics, encryption, blockchain)
 - Multiple Voting Channels
 - Voatz conveniently supports all ballot and voting formats, whether electronic or paper, on-site or remote
 - Increase Engagement
 - Increase participation with multiple methods of communication and voting, with accessibility features
 - Save Time
 - Optimized mobile voting experience (vote from home if desired); administrators benefit from instantaneous vote tabulation
 - Audit Trail
 - Conduct multiple, rigorous post-election audits with two audit trails – one for the voter, one for the Election Administrator
 - Voatz Mobile App
 - Administrative Portal
 - Voatz Tablet

MAYOR HARTKE said Vice Mayor Stewart has been working a lot with the City Clerk to test new technologies and thanked Vice Mayor Stewart for furthering this concept.

VICE MAYOR STEWART said this would not be done without the support of Council when they did the budget amendments.

COUNCILMEMBER LOPEZ asked when the ballot comes in, if there is a way for an administrator to manipulate or change a ballot, or for a voter to vote more than once.

MS. DeLONG said no, an administrator cannot change the votes on the ballot and the first ballot in is the one that is counted so someone could not vote twice.

COUNCILMEMBER LOPEZ asked if after someone votes it is locked in and an administrator has view only access.

MS. DeLONG said the process is that the administrator prints the ballot and then the tabulation part runs like a regular election would where the ballot runs through the machines.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS asked when a person votes, if it leaves a digital footprint to show how it was originally submitted to then verify if a ballot was tampered with or not.

MS. DeLONG said yes, it is part of the audit process and when the voter votes they are issued a receipt to show how it was registered in the program.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS said right now, the ballot is tracked and asked if it has the same capability.

MS. DeLONG said yes, voters would be able to track their ballot and if someone tries to go in again the app would say they have already voted.

COUNCILMEMBER ROE asked if there is a way to get results from Voatz as well as votes from the paper ballot to ensure they both match.

MS. DeLONG said yes, Voatz has an audit process set up. The City will conduct the tabulation process similar to the way the county does now, and then a full audit will take place in a live setting so people can watch and verify against the system.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked how long it takes for someone to vote.

MS. DeLONG said about five minutes.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked if someone's ID stays in the system or if it is deleted after some time.

MS. DeLONG said it goes away and for this purpose the app looks to ensure the person's face matches the ID that was put in.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked where the person's information is stored and how long it is kept after the election in the system.

MS. DeLONG said she would get further clarification from the company.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if the company keeps the information for any reason.

MS. DeLONG said no, it is just for the audit process. In a regular election, ballots are kept for six months and then they are destroyed and it would follow the same process.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said someone's ID is vital information unlike a ballot.

MS. DeLONG said that information would be protected and disposed of it in the proper way. In a regular election, an ID is verified against the voter rolls.

COUNCILMEMBER LOPEZ said he thought the ballot retention was longer than six months.

MS. DeLONG said no, not unless it has changed at the legislature this year, the retention period is six months. The signature rosters are permanent.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS asked if this scans the ID and if this is verified through the DMV.

MS. DeLONG said it compares it to the county's voter information.

MATT BURDICK, Communications and Public Affairs Director, continued the presentation.

- Community Outreach and Youth Engagement

MS. DeLONG continued the presentation.

- Background Info
 - State Statute requires cities and towns to hold their elections on consolidated election dates.
 - City of Chandler contracts with Maricopa County to run Chandler's elections, as they have the infrastructure and appropriate level of resources.
- Efforts to Date
 - 2019-2020
 - \$50,000 Budget Amendment to research mobile voting utilizing blockchain technology.
 - Met with election officials in other states who had conducted mobile voting elections.
 - Met with Adrian Fontes, Maricopa County Recorder.
 - Maricopa County did not want to participate.
 - 2021
 - Proposal to utilize mobile voting option for the City's Bond Election
 - Met with Stephen Richer, Maricopa County Recorder and Jack Sellers, Maricopa County Board of Supervisors
 - Maricopa County did not want to explore a mobile voting option at this time.

VICE MAYOR STEWART said with everything happening at the legislature there was still hesitation, but they were more open than they were before. People have started to get more comfortable with the technology as they start using it and hearing about it.

MS. DeLONG continued the presentation.

- Efforts to Date (cont)
 - 2021

- Proposed partnership with Chandler Schools to educate students on City Elections and conduct a mock election where students would cast votes utilizing their mobile devices.
 - Presented idea to Chandler Unified and Kyrene school districts.
 - Both indicated they were not in a position to pursue the project at this time.
- Mobile Voting Pilot Program Proposal – November 2021
 - Conduct mobile voting pilot in November 2021, following the City Bond Election.
 - Allow all citizens to sign up for mobile voting pilot.
 - Tabulate the results and conduct a full audit
 - Present a detailed report to the Council

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS asked if staff reached out to charter or private schools.

MR. BURDICK said yes, there are some that are interested in exploring the opportunity.

MS. DeLONG continued the presentation.

- Mobile Voting Pilot Program
 - Conduct with Voatz to run a mobile voting pilot following to Nov 2 Bond Election.
 - Staff will do citizen outreach informing them of the opportunity to participate in the mobile voting pilot.
 - The mobile voting would run for a 3 week period.
 - The mobile voting pilot would be set up to distinguish between participants over 18 and those under 18.
 - The questions would mirror the bond election and would include questions about utilizing mobile voting in the future.
- Ballot Questions
 - Include the bond questions that were presented in the Nov 2 Election
 - Parks and Rec Bond
 - Public Safety Fire Bonds
 - Public Safety Police Bonds
 - Public Works Improvement Bonds
 - Municipal Facilities Bonds
 - Add additional questions...
- Ballot questions
 - If City of Chandler voters were provided the option of casting a ballot using a blockchain technology application on their mobile device, would you choose this option to cast your ballot?
 - If City of Chandler voters were provided more options for casting a ballot in future local elections, indicate your preferred method for casting a ballot (select no more than three options):
 - Vote through in-person ballot
 - Drop-off ballot at voting center

- Submit mail-in ballot via U.S. Postal Service
 - Cast ballot on mobile device
- Timeline
 - Aug 26 Council Consider Contract
 - Sept. 1- Nov. 1 Prepare for Mobile Voting Pilot
 - Nov. 8 Advertising Begins
 - Nov. 9-30 Allow Citizens to Sign-up and Vote
 - Nov. 30 Last Day to Vote
 - Dec. 1-3 Start Tabulation and Audit
 - Dec. 9 Report to Council
- Funding
 - The Voatz contract presented to Council for consideration on Aug. 26.
 - The Cost
 - \$30,000 to set up the mobile voting pilot
 - \$2 for every voter who participates
 - Funding is available in the City Clerk's election budget.
- Request direction to move forward with the Mobile Voting Pilot Program as presented.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked if the first \$50,000 that was already given as the budget amendment was spent.

MS. DeLONG said no, after researching what other jurisdictions and cities were doing and not knowing how far we would get, that money was not used and went back into the general fund.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS clarified that the money was not available anymore.

MS. DeLONG said no, it was not spent and went back to the general fund.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if there was an estimate for how many voters there would be.

MS. DeLONG said they did not have an estimate on how many would participate.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said it was important moving forward with this and there would never be a good time to do this and wanted to look to see if there was another way this could be used. Councilmember Orlando said there was a parks survey coming up and if this could be utilized for that to test the technology until it is accepted at a higher level.

MS. DeLONG said staff originally had thought of doing the budget survey with this and it would not be limited to bond questions, we could have any questions. Ms. DeLong said the idea was to have people feel like they were voting in an election, but they could do something else and expand the scope.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if the \$30,000 set up would have to be done each time plus \$2 per voter.

MR. BURDICK said there would be some setup costs for each time.

MS. DeLONG said for each time we use the company the cost would decrease. For a real election, they charge \$2 per registered voter like the county does now. Since this is not a real election, they are not charging per registered voter.

MR. BURDICK said the cost is not only for the technology but also importing the data for registered voters.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if the set-up cost would be less after we have done it once.

MR. BURDICK said staff would get more information from the company.

COUNCILMEMBER ROE said there is another company that has done some electronic voting that is in the news a lot and would like to verify that Voatz is not affiliated with them. Councilmember Roe asked how they would address electioneering in the future with this technology.

KELLY SCHWAB, City Attorney, said the same laws apply. What people can do with paper ballots they could do with electronic ballots. There is no law that says people could not get 100 people together and fill out their ballots at the same time but there is a law about one person filling out 100 peoples' ballots or telling people how to vote.

COUNCILMEMBER ROE said they could not throw a party and say this is the candidate and have everyone vote at the same time.

MS. SCHWAB said that was true. The laws have not caught up to mobile voting and there would have to be laws addressing that. This has not been done yet in Arizona except for mobile voting for service members overseas. There would have to be some refinement.

MS. DeLONG said the bond election is a ballot by mail election and in a real election there would still be mail ballots and vote centers and then electronic voting would be an option.

VICE MAYOR STEWART asked if the cost could be capped on the number of ballots to be accepted.

MS. DeLONG said that would be a good way to keep the cost down.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said the first 10,000.

VICE MAYOR STEWART said there are a number of vendors that do this and there are other companies that could be utilized. The work that staff has done to get to this point has been incredible.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if Council would like to move forward and if Council would like to cap the contract.

COUNCILMEMBER LOPEZ said he agreed to cap the contract to what is manageable for the Clerk's budget. Councilmember Lopez said using this for a survey seems excessive. Councilmember Lopez asked if the data was kept on premises or if it was cloud based and if there were certificates for when the data was destroyed.

MS. DeLONG said staff would get that information.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said if people get used to providing input this way on smaller issues then the technology will be easier to implement in the future and for those types of surveys it does not need to have the extra verification steps like a ballot.

MAYOR HARTKE said Councilmember Orlando was suggesting getting people used to mobile voting not going through the security cost.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if Council was in favor.

VICE MAYOR STEWART said yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LOPEZ asked if they could ask more demographic questions in the questions and if they voted in the bond election.

COUNCILMEMBER ROE said this is a great way for people to get involved and was in favor.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO was in agreement and wanted a cap on the agreement.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said she like the idea but there are people in the City who do not have access or do not have adequate access to the internet and said she would like more research on how this would be available to them. Councilmember Ellis said she liked the idea and wanted to ensure there was infrastructure in place for people to access things like this.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS asked if this would be available for iOS and Android.

MS. DeLONG said yes.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS said this was forward thinking and this was a great testament to the forward-thinking people we have at the table. Councilmember Harris said he was in agreement and it seems like everyone has a cell phone now days and there are government programs that provide free cell phones.

MAYOR HARTKE asked what the youngest age that is being accepted.

MR. BURDICK said there are internet privacy issues below age 13.

MS. SCHWAB advised it should be 13 and above because of those issues. The burden has been put on Voatz to ensure this is compliant with all internet laws as well as maintaining security so there are enforcement avenues if needed.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS said he wanted the contract cap to be 10,000 voters.

VICE MAYOR STEWART said 10,000 was a fair number and wanted to see if there was room to negotiate with the company for a graduating scale.

MAYOR HARTKE asked what the largest group that has been done with blockchain technology.

MS. SCHWAB said overseas military would probably be the largest.

MS. DeLONG said the City has 170,000 registered voters and the company has tried it for military overseas voters and it has been successful but those numbers are smaller.

MAYOR HARTKE said he was in agreement with 10,000 voters but would like to see more if they agree to a scale.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS agreed.

MS. DeLONG said they would not exceed \$50,000.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

Mayor

Approval Date of Minutes: September 20, 2021

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Work Session of the City Council of Chandler, Arizona, held on the 23rd day of August 2021. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DATED this _____ day of September, 2021.

City Clerk