

# Meeting Minutes

## City Council Special Meeting

December 14, 2023 | 4:00 p.m.  
Chandler Museum  
300 S. Chandler Village Dr. Chandler, AZ



### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kevin Hartke at 4:13 p.m.

### Roll Call

#### Council Attendance

Mayor Kevin Hartke  
Vice Mayor Matt Orlando  
Councilmember OD Harris  
Councilmember Mark Stewart  
Councilmember Christine Ellis  
Councilmember Jane Poston  
Councilmember Angel Encinas

#### Appointee Attendance

Josh Wright, City Manager  
Dana DeLong, City Clerk  
Tawn Kao, Assistant City Attorney

#### Staff Attendance

Tadd Wille, Assistant City Manager  
Andy Bass, Deputy City Manager

#### Others in Attendance

Representative Jennifer Pawlik, LD-13  
Senator Mitzi Epstein, LD-12  
Representative Patty Contreras, LD-12  
Representative Julie Willoughby, LD-13  
Dana Paschke, PolicyAZ

### Welcome and Introductions – Mayor Kevin Hartke

### Topics of Discussion – no action will be taken

1. 2024 Legislative Agenda

MAYOR HARTKE reaffirmed the importance of local control for jurisdictions. We continue to work together with other legislators concerning local control. Cities have unique financial structures that

depend on different revenue streams and it is important to understand that we have our own ways to meet the needs of our residents. Water, economic development, and affordable housing are recent subjects of note. Mayor Hartke asked what issues were important to the Legislators during this legislative session.

REPRESENTATIVE PAWLIK brought up something the school superintendent is working on which is a program for retired police officers serving in schools to get more officers in schools. There are currently not enough SROs available for all schools that have requested one. Officers will have eight hours of training and will serve on a rotating schedule. Representative Pawlik also mentioned a focus of hers for the session was full-day kindergarten. It is expensive, but leaders in schools have said it is important to us.

SENATOR EPSTEIN said a lot of her work is around being the minority leader of the Senate and organizing the caucus. There will be a retreat to plan joint caucus policies. The three subjects of note have been housing, schools, and water. The Chandler approach to affordable housing is innovative. Senator Epstein asked for feedback on income discrimination. Senator Epstein is working on K-12 funding to keep up with inflation. The goal is to not cut K-12 funding.

MAYOR HARTKE said we are taking notes on the legislators' questions to be able to provide input on them rather than have a full discussion now.

REPRESENTATIVE CONTRERAS thanked Chandler staff for tours of the water facilities and housing. They shared great programs and information about Chandler. One focus is keeping level funding for schools. Representative Contreras shared that one goal is to not have cuts to social services especially those that serve seniors and disabled persons. Representative Contreras mentioned deed fraud is becoming more prevalent and mentioned working on preventative measures to protect homeowners.

REPRESENTATIVE WILLOUGHBY shared excitement about going into the next session. Representative Willoughby has been working with the ICAP department about protecting individuals regarding AI technology. Other areas is working on a cleanup of Title 36 to mirror other parts of statute. Outside of session, they have met with the chambers of commerce and bringing business to Arizona.

MAYOR HARTKE asked for the legislators' thoughts and perspectives on the deficit. As a city, we are concerned about funding from the state.

SENATOR EPSTEIN said deficits have been treated by cutting school funding, cut city funding, and cut childcare. We should avoid coming to this – there is a deficit, caused by either a spending or a revenue problem that should be adjusted not at the expense of cities or counties. Our responsibilities according to the state constitution should not fall behind. There are some ideas on where to get funding particularly in reevaluating economic development choices.

REPRESENTATIVE CONTRERAS added that there is a potential to pause projects that were approved but not started. We are at a tax level that does not sustain our needs. The goal is to make up the budget from various departments, not cities and education.

REPRESENTATIVE WILLOUGHBY brought up that K-12 and public safety funding are non-negotiable, and said it is about accountability. Different committees will have a good idea of exactly what we are doing.

REPRESENTATIVE PAWLIK added that amounts of the shortfall have been varied from different sources. Many transportation projects have been funded, but more infrastructure improvements are sorely needed. It will be different than any other terms served, and as a governing body we need to be thoughtful on where we can source funding from.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if there are any ideas for housing reform, and any thoughts on bills coming up this year.

REPRESENTATIVE CONTRERAS mentioned the bicameral push to look at different ideas - speakers from out of state and tours have provided new ideas. There is a wide variety of housing options available. The unknown funding situation means that housing reform may need to wait. It is essential that cities maintain zoning. Affordable housing is the key.

REPRESENTATIVE WILLOUGHBY said many conversations have been focused on the year's budget.

SENATOR EPSTEIN said they were on board with encouraging cities to think creatively about affordable housing. Cities consider new changes in light of the current housing situation, and local control allows for that. Consumer protection in housing is important.

MAYOR HARTKE asked legislators how they could help them.

REPRESENTATIVE WILLOUGHBY said the current relationship is great and Chandler always provides answers and resources needed; keeping the line of communication open is great.

REPRESENTATIVE PAWLIK reaffirmed to keep doing what you are doing. Communication is great – it makes our jobs easier.

SENATOR EPSTEIN added that Chandler's expertise on water is fantastic – Chandler is a leader in water when it comes to long-term planning.

REPRESENTATIVE CONTRERAS said Chandler is great to work with, having charts and pictures is a great way to convey information.

MAYOR HARTKE said we are here for you.

## 2. Chandler Updates

VICE MAYOR ORLANDO asked when we learn about the budget.

REPRESENTATIVE WILLOUGHBY said the governor's budget would likely be released January 12. SENATOR EPSTEIN said their budget may be done by the end of February and finding out about the deficit around April.

VICE MAYOR ORLANDO reaffirmed that our elected officials in Chandler are great individuals. We want to be accessible and communicate with each other. Vice Mayor Orlando thanked the legislators for continuing this pattern, we will continue to work together with information and share impacts.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART shared gratitude for legislators sticking by their statements of allowing local control. Sharing our valuable data about housing is important. Chandler's water portfolio success statement is because we invested early.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS thanked legislators for coming and sharing their vision as it helps us understand the complexities of the issues at hand. Focusing on innovation and technology industry is essential.

SENATOR EPSTEIN asked what the impact on rental tax was.

MAYOR HARTKE said the rental tax was \$11 million, and the food tax would be \$15 million. Every city looks at money differently.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS thanked legislators for putting in the work to be educated, they have taken the time to learn. Higher education is important, we need to provide opportunities for post-high school education, our workforce depends on this. Councilmember Ellis also mentioned that civic engagement is important to focus on in Chandler. Students and community members getting involved is important.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS said it is great for the community to be able to see the legislators. Continuing our great practices and long-term visions is the goal.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON added that will be more emphasis on our voters needs in terms of our general plan as a ground-up community effort.

REPRESENTATIVE CONTRERAS said we have an idea of how cities work, from going from the community level up. There is communication with residents, and this is the way it works from cities.

MAYOR HARTKE said we hope to continue meeting with legislators and work on making our communication even better than ever in the year to come.

## Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:19 pm.

ATTEST: *Dana R. Dilling*  
City Clerk

*Kevin Harthe*  
Mayor

Approval Date of Minutes: January 11, 2024

## Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Special Meeting of the City Council of Chandler, Arizona, held on the 14th day of December 2023. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DATED this <sup>11th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ day of January, 2024.

*Dana R. Dilling*  
City Clerk

