

Meeting Minutes

City Council Work Session

July 15, 2024 | 4:00 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 4:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Council Attendance

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

Appointee Attendance

Tadd Wille, Acting City Manager
Kelly Schwab, City Attorney
Dana DeLong, City Clerk

Staff in Attendance

Dawn Lang, Deputy City Manager / Chief Financial Officer
Alexis Apodaca, Mayor & Council Public Affairs Senior Manager
Alicia Rosenburg, Forensic Services Senior Manager
Bryan Chapman, Police Chief
Matt Burdick, Communications & Public Affairs Director

Discussion

1. Coordination and Communication of Road Construction Projects in Chandler

MAYOR HARTKE called for a staff presentation.

TADD WILLE, Assistant City Manager, introduced the discussion item.

ALICIA ROSENBURG, Forensic Services Senior Manager, presented the following presentation.

- Building a Comprehensive Crime Laboratory
- Agenda
 - Background & History
 - Current State
 - Proposed Future State
 - Next Steps
 - Questions
- Background and History
 - Chandler Police Department Forensic Services Section
- 92% of survey respondents agree that they feel safe in Chandler
 - FY24-25 Resident Budget Survey Citizen and Spidr Tech
 - "I have always had outstanding service with Chandler Police"
 - "My car was stolen in September 2023. The police showed up immediately and my car was located the same day. Excellent level of communication, empathy and instilled trust."
 - We feel very safe, thank you to Chandler PD for your service and sacrifice!"
 - Fantastic service from my initial call to the follow-up report by the officer. Very impressed great job all around."
- Chandler Police Department 2023 UCR Part I Crime Index by Crime Category
- Year-to-Date Totals Jan. 1 – Dec. 31
- Crime Rate History & Trends
- Chandler Population Growth
- Chief Chapman
 - "While our city's proactive approach to adopting advanced technologies and innovative strategies has contributed to a downward trend in the crime rate, we must continue to evolve to keep pace with our growing population and emerging challenges."
- History of Forensic Services
- Citizen Bond Exploratory Committee
 - Public Safety Subcommittee – Police 2020
 - CIB & Communications Renovations \$6.4M
 - Forensic Services Facility 576 W. Pecos Rd. \$38.3M
 - Emergency Vehicles \$1.6M
 - Main Station Renovations \$9.6M
 - 23,500 square feet recommended for Forensic Services expansion based upon 2014 Facilities Master Plan.
- Committee Recommendations

VICE MAYOR HARRIS asked if the committee recommendations were created for the bond election in 2021.

MS. ROSENBURG said yes, this has been in discussion with the exploratory committee in 2020 and approved by vote in 2021.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS asked what the percentage of approval of the bond question was.

MAYOR HARTKE answered that the percentage of approval for the bonds was about 70%.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS asked if the forensic facility was affected by power outages where backup generators had failed.

MS. ROSENBURG noted that the facility was affected by the outage and some machines were affected. The reason as to why the original power outage occurred was fixed, but a new facility would include backup generators.

MS. ROSENBURG continued the presentation.

- Committee Recommendations Public Safety Subcommittee
- November 2021 voters gave the authorization to issue bonds to fund capital projects planned in the 10-year CIP
- Current State
- Unit Accomplishments
 - More than a decade as an ISO 17025 accredited Forensic Laboratory
 - Recipient of the Maximus Award for six consecutive years, demonstrating sustained excellence and high efficiency.
- Crime Scene Unit Personnel
 - 10 full-time Crime Scene Technicians
 - 2 Crime Scene Technician Leads
 - 1 Crime Scene Supervisor
 - 4 cross-trained for ABIS ten print
 - 24/7 Crime Scene Response
- Forensic Analysis Unit Personnel
 - 5 full-time Forensic Scientists
 - 1 Forensic Scientist Supervisor
 - Cross training is not commonly adopted as an industry standard
 - Blood alcohol, seized drugs, latent print
- 2023 Caseload
 - 945 Blood Alcohol Cases
 - 1213 Seized Drug Cases
 - 520 Latent Print Cases
 - 2631 Crime Scenes processed
- Blood Alcohol Analysis
- Seized Drug Analysis

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS commented that since the industry standards to work on seized drug analysis is around 30 days, it is impressive that the lab's turnaround time is 14 days.

MS. ROSENBURG said that it is common for publicly funded laboratories to have backlogs, so achieving a turnaround time of 14 days is a proud achievement.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART asked if residents have feedback about the current turnaround time for the lab processing.

MS. ROSENBURG said that it is important for the laboratory to do their part to complete processing in a timely manner for any investigations.

MAYOR HARTKE asked how delays are handled with the County Attorney's Office.

MS. ROSENBURG explained that if the crime lab has not completed the analysis, the Attorney's Office will continue a case in order to have forensic reports complete before scheduling a firm trial date.

MS. ROSENBURG continued the presentation.

- Latent Print Analysis
- Performance Metrics
- Forensic Services

MAYOR HARTKE asked about the industry standard time to complete latent fingerprint analysis.

MS. ROSENBURG said that the lab's performance metric is currently 90 days, which they are achieving. The goal would be to complete latent print analysis under 30 days to compare to the industry standard. Ms. Rosenberg explained there has been some difficulty in hiring to fill vacated positions, as the training for the position takes about two years. The current facility has a limited capacity to process latent fingerprints due to a lack of space.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked what percentage of forensic cases are outsourced to outside processing facilities.

MS. ROSENBURG said staff will follow up with that information.

MS. ROSENBURG continued the presentation.

- Current Facility Limitations
 - Built in 1999
 - 5,500 sq. ft. lab
 - 3,000 sq. ft. biohazard and vehicle bay
 - Reached capacity in 2005

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked how analysts handle volatile substances in the lab.

MS. ROSENBURG said currently there is not enough space in the lab for a clean entry space separate to the handling of other substances in the laboratory, this would be planned for in the expansion.

MS. ROSENBURG continued the presentation.

- Outsourcing Services – Limitations
- 2023 Blood Drug Analysis
 - 177 Blood Drug Cases submitted to AZDPS for analysis – outsourced
- 2023 DNA Analysis
 - 97 DNA Cases submitted to AZDPS for analysis – outsourced
- DNA Analysis
 - 1:10 cases in which DNA evidence is collected is submitted for analysis to AZDPS
 - Chandler experienced a significant number of property crimes, 10 were submitted for DNA analysis.
 - For property crimes cases, the AZDPS lab will process 1 item of evidence per suspect with a known exemplar.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked if DNA analysis could be used on older collected evidence.

MS. ROSENBURG said it is possible, but there would be a high demand for DNA analysis.

MAYOR HARTKE spoke about the need to have quality property evidence procedures.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked if there is a way to prioritize retroactive DNA analysis.

MS. ROSENBURG said that discussion would include officers and command staff to determine priorities.

MS. ROSENBURG continued the presentation.

- Projected Case Numbers
- Forensic Services
 - Current
 - 24/7 Crime Scene Response
 - Ten-Print Analysis
 - Blood Alcohol Analysis (DUI)
 - Seized Drugs
 - Latent Fingerprints
 - Key Additions
 - DNA

- Blood Drug Analysis (DUI and Sex Assault)
 - Computer Forensics / Digital Evidence
- Current Lab built 1999
- Reached capacity 2005
- Recommended square feet 29,996
- Future State of Forensic Services

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked about the previously conducted facility feasibility study.

MS. ROSENBURG said potential floor plans have been explored but a full rendered design has not been completed.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked about the current and projected number of staff needed.

MS. ROSENBURG said there is a projected need of seven additional forensic scientists to address new types of analysis.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART asked if appropriation is designated to cover the project need of seven additional staff.

MS. LANG answered that it is included in the five-year general fund forecast by year three.

MS. ROSENBURG continued the presentation.

- Impact of Expanding DNA to Forensic Services
 - Evidence shows that applying DNA Analysis to property crimes yields results.
 - More than twice as many suspects are identified, arrested and accepted for prosecution.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if expanding DNA to forensic services would increase prosecution that could theoretically decrease crime.

MS. ROSENBURG said it would be another tool to identify and prosecute suspects.

MS. ROSENBURG continued the presentation.

- Computer Forensics / Digital Evidence
 - Freeing up officers to concentrate on investigations
 - Standardized practices to efficiently collect and analyze large volumes of evidence
 - Leverage expertise for a reliable and verifiable analysis

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if officers have been completing analysis of computer or digital evidence.

MS. ROSENBURG said some officers have done some analysis of digital evidence themselves. The goal is to shift the work to the forensic services team.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked if the officers doing analysis are in a specific area.

MS. ROSENBURG said the officers doing analysis are in a specialty area and receive advanced training to perform that work.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if these officers are assigned to forensic analysis specialty units.

MS. ROSENBURG said they are assigned to the computer forensics unit and work on investigation and analysis. Other officers within the department submit evidence to them for analysis. These officers would be relieved of the forensic activity and would be planned for in the additional personnel included in the facility expansion plan.

MS. ROSENBURG continued the presentation.

- Impact of Expanded Forensic Services
 - Firearms – Database
 - The nationwide database is used to match ballistic evidence with other cases.
 - Guns need to be test-fired so the bullet patterns can be matched to those in the database.
 - This is a chance to create a proper space for both test-firing guns and using the database.
- Forensic Facility Benefits to Chandler
 - Supporting forensic needs: committed to fulfilling criminal justice requirements.
 - Forensic science utilization: developing investigative leads through advanced forensic science.
 - Prioritizing investigations: aligning with officers' investigative priorities.
 - Expedited testing: providing rapid, selective analysis.
 - Public Trust: sustaining and strengthening public confidence.
- Feasibility Study
 - The city conducted RFQ and selected SmithGroup to perform a pre-design study.
 - The scope of services included:
 - Facility needs and requirements
 - Adjacency to the existing Property and Evidence Facility
 - Potential public outreach services
 - Pre-design services
 - Preliminary cost estimate
 - Received \$290,000 of funding in FY 2022-23 for the feasibility study.
 - The Feasibility Study was completed in FY 2023-24.
- Feasibility Study Recommendation

- 29,996 Square Feet – Single Story
 - \$59.2M
 - Connected to the Property & Evidence Building
- Capital Budget
 - Design
 - \$5,259,000
 - FY2024-25
 - Public Safety Bond Fund 460
 - Construction
 - \$59,212,000
 - FY 2025-26
 - \$50,081,000 from Public Safety Bond Fund 460
 - \$9,131,000 from General Fund 401
- Next Steps
- Design Phase FY2024-25
 - Continuation of the partnership with the SmithGroup
 - Design a better future for forensic services in our city
- Exploring Partnerships
 - Potential partnership with Town of Gilbert
 - Looking at business model, timing, cost sharing, and level of service expectations
 - Partnership would include Maintenance & Operations, and Capital from both agencies
 - Will return to City Council if partnership makes sense for both parties

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked about what a potential partnership with another municipality would look like.

MS. ROSENBURG explained that more research was needed. A partnership could be written in a vendor contract, or an intergovernmental agreement.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked how capacity and personnel would be included in a partnership model.

MS. ROSENBURG said that any model which includes paying for full time employees, instruments, and service contracts would need further investigation.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO clarified that the goal is to maintain the ability to get Chandler personnel to capacity, and potentially hire excess personnel to meet demand.

MS. ROSENBURG explained that to effectively engage in any partnership, the lab would likely need additional personnel to what is currently proposed.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if there would be more facility space needed to participate in a partnership.

MS. ROSENBURG said the current planned building is not expected to be at capacity with Chandler's proposed additional forensic personnel, but in a partnership scenario, capacity may be reached sooner. This could be anticipated by including additional space.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS inquired into a business plan or study of a potential partnership.

MR. WILLE said discussions have focused on the governance structure, capital contributions, business plan, and delivering services in a timely manner.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS spoke about investigating other regional needs and partnerships outside of bordering municipalities and how a facility may aid the region as a whole.

MS. ROSENBURG continued the presentation.

- Further Considerations
 - Central location and proximity to property and evidence are critical
 - Renovations of the main substation cannot proceed until the laboratory moves out
 - Aging infrastructure of the current laboratory & cost incurred by construction delays
 - Laboratory moves require an additional set up period
- Process Timeline
- Forensic Services Facility
 - Investing in a crime lab will result in enhanced public safety and increased community trust.
- Questions

MAYOR HARTKE asked if some existing equipment could be used at the new facility.

MS. ROSENBURG said some equipment would be eligible to move. There is also a consideration to some equipment reaching its end-of-life and cost-effectiveness of moving the equipment or purchasing new equipment to replace it.

MAYOR HARTKE requested more information about additional forensic facilities and renting space compared to the forensic facility proposal.

MS. ROSENBURG shared handout Forensic Facility – Existing Building Availability and Lease Rates.

MS. ROSENBURG said looking into potential properties with the space needs is a difficult balance between price, space, closeness to current facility, and improvements needed. Out of 12 options identified, an average leasing price of a space this size would be around \$900,000 annually. Extensive renovations to the existing buildings would be needed. Discussions were had with

SmithGroup, who shared examples of a Maricopa County Sheriff's Office facility renovation. While this renovation did have some cost savings for the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, it was a smaller project housing fewer forensic disciplines. Additionally, there are some additional security measures that would be needed due to the nature of the facility, it may be challenging to house it in a public building. To prioritize safety, it would require a limited entry to command staff and specific laboratory employees. Additional considerations include the need for an exterior training space in the lab for crime scene technicians to train outside; structural considerations such as the need to bring vehicles into the facility on a vehicle lift; mechanical; and electrical components. With these considerations, there is a possibility that the cost to lease could exceed the cost to build a new facility.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what the predicted cost would be.

MS. ROSENBURG said that a total predicted cost including renovations was not calculated.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked for clarification on the statement that the cost of leasing may exceed the cost to build a new facility, and asked if there has been consideration on selling existing land or combining forensic space with another area.

MS. ROSENBURG said moving property and evidence, as well as selling a facility have not been analyzed.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked how large the existing property and evidence facility is.

MS. ROSENBURG said staff will follow up with that information.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if the city owns the existing property and evidence facility.

MS. ROSENBURG confirmed that the city owns the existing property and evidence facility.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked where the property and evidence facility is in relation to the vacant land.

MS. ROSENBURG said the vacant land is adjacent to the property and evidence facility.

MAYOR HARTKE confirmed that the city owns the vacant land and the property and evidence facility.

MS. ROSENBURG said that was correct. A part of the vacant land is owned as a future well site. The planned facility has that section of land preserved.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked to ensure that there is a balance between these considerations and existing buildings in Chandler. Councilmember Orlando asked to investigate the potential of leasing an existing building or combining spaces.

MS. ROSENBURG said in-depth analysis would take some time, especially to include SmithGroup to evaluate options moving forward.

MR. WILLE said a challenge of being able to provide an accurate figure is that this would warrant a case-by-case analysis of the 12 facilities identified. Every facility would need a specific calculation on how much it would cost to retrofit the appropriate needs to serve as a forensic facility.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked about offset trade studies when previously discussed in CIP considerations.

MAYOR HARTKE commented that it would depend on existing facilities that would be able to transfer. There is a need to have the evidence facility close by, and wondered what value there would be to selling an existing asset if there is still a need for a facility that fits the needs. The estimate lease rate would not consider the improvements needed. It is almost an industrial need rather than an office need.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO noted that the current lab was built in 1999 and reached capacity in 2005 and shared concerns about reaching capacity at a similar rate. The consideration would then be to look at a larger facility or outright plan for expansion.

MR. WILLE asked in the current forensic facility study, how many years it was estimated to reach capacity.

MS. ROSENBURG said initially the goal was 30 years. To meet this goal, a two story building was proposed, but was ultimately reduced to one story in order to be closer to the budget. While laboratory space was about the same; there was a reduction in office space, conference rooms, and training areas in order to accommodate a one story floor plan.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART said the price has increased due to inflation, causing changes in design, which may cause changes in capacity. Councilmember Stewart asked about opportunities to look at the market for leased industrial space that would be able to be retrofit to accommodate forensic service needs. Councilmember Stewart asked if the SmithGroup is the design company.

MS. ROSENBURG said currently there is no contract for design, but it is likely SmithGroup would be the design company and may assist with a renovation.

COUNCILMEMBER STEWART suggested asking a contractor about the cost for square footage for a lease and all improvements included to have a number to consider. Councilmember Stewart asked where the partnership discussion left off with other municipalities.

MR. WILLE said the City Manager's Office has had discussions on partnerships with municipalities.

MAYOR HARTKE asked about Council consensus.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said part of the study should consider being able to rent enough space. The forensic facility is needed, but there needs to be more study to have due diligence in selecting the right site.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked for a timeframe to complete the studies, cost analysis to lease and retrofit, and follow through for residents before inflation causes costs to rise further.

MAYOR HARTKE summarized the desire to see if there are existing buildings available that could accommodate forensic service facility needs before making a decision.

VICE MAYOR HARRIS requested more information on existing building availability.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked if there were any existing Chandler-owned buildings that would work for this facility.

MR. WILLE said staff investigated vacant space and existing facilities and would not recommend using a currently occupied facility. Based on conversations today, further analysis is needed.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked if the current square footage estimate for the facility would limit the ability to have a successful partnership.

MS. ROSENBERG answered that the square footage estimate may house a partnership of a similar size lab, however with municipalities continuing to grow, demand rising, and reaching build out, capacity may be reached sooner.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said 29,000 may not reach these demands and may look for a larger footprint in the analysis of the leasing space.

Council consensus directed staff to conduct additional research and analysis on existing building availability and lease rates for the forensic facility.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

ATTEST: *Dana R. Dilling*
City Clerk

Kevin Harthe
Mayor

Approval Date of Minutes: August 12, 2024

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 15th day of July 2024. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DATED this 12th day of August, 2024.

Dana R. Dilling
City Clerk

