

Meeting Minutes

City Charter Amendment

Resident Advisory Committee

Regular Meeting

August 13, 2025 | 4:30 p.m.
2nd Floor Training Room A, City Hall
175 S. Arizona Ave., Chandler, AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lopez at 4:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Commission Attendance

Chair René Lopez
Committee Member Heather Anguiano
Committee Member Ursula Gordwin
Committee Member Sherida McMullan
Committee Member Lisa Askey
Committee Member Jim Jurnak
Committee Member Jennifer Pawlik

Staff Attendance

Ryan Peters, Strategic Initiatives Director
Jen Winkler, Assistant City Attorney
Jennifer Ekblad, Deputy City Clerk

Absent

Committee Member Brad Davis – excused

Consent Agenda and Discussion

1. July 2025 City Charter Amendment Resident Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Move City Charter Amendment Resident Advisory Committee approve the meeting minutes of the July 31, 2025, Regular Meeting.

Consent Agenda Motion and Vote

Chair Lopez moved to approve the Consent Agenda of the August 13, 2025, City Charter Amendment Resident Advisory Committee Meeting; Seconded by Committee Member Jurnak.

Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Discussion

2. Discussion and Consideration of Potential Revisions to Charter Article I, Powers of the City; Article II, City Council; Article III, City Manager; and Article IV, Administrative Departments

CHAIR LOPEZ introduced the item and called for a staff presentation.

RYAN PETERS, Strategic Initiatives Director, presented the following presentation.

- City Charter Amendment Resident Advisory Committee
- Agenda
- Committee and Charter Amendment Process
- Review and Discussion of Proposed Updates to Articles I-IV of the City Charter

MR. PETERS asked for direction regarding the committee's opinion on staff proceeding to draft general & technical updates including out-of-date language, capitalization and punctuation, references to gender, and general clean-up for consistency and clarity.

CHAIR LOPEZ agreed with this suggestion. He asked if the committee needed to request these general and technical updates specifically.

MR. PETERS said staff will return with language to reflect the general and technical changes approved by the committee. Language edits will return to the committee for review.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK said yes and suggested paying attention to specificity and details when reviewing the charter document.

JEN WINKLER, Assistant City Attorney, said the request is to receive direction if staff may proceed with drafting charter edits to include grammar and spelling corrections, in order to save the committee from doing that alone. Drafted edits will come back to the committee for review.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKEY noted that Exhibit A of the proposed charter amendment ballot language does not contain gender neutral language and asked if that can be changed.

MR. PETERS said the amendment was drafted to be consistent with the existing charter. If the charter amendment is approved in November, the committee can address it after it is adopted.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKEY asked if the committee planned to meet after the November 2025 election in order to address the charter amendment election results.

MR. PETERS said it is at the request of the committee.

CHAIR LOPEZ said the committee may convene and if a charter amendment does not pass at the election, it can be brought up again for discussion.

Committee consensus was to direct staff to draft general and technical updates to the City Charter.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Article I. Powers of the City, 1.01 – 1.04

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK suggested a change to charter section 1.02, to remove language that may have been from the original charter.

MS. WINKLER said this language may be included for legal reasons, as charter cities have different legal powers than other cities. She said she will do some research and come back with an answer.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK suggested a change to charter section 1.03, to add clarifying language referring to the state as Arizona, and to remove repeated language. He noted that in the section denoting who the city can contract with, non-profit organizations are not listed.

MS. WINKLER said the language that refers to the enumeration of powers by the charter to not be exclusive would permit contracts with non-profit organizations or entities not specially listed in the charter.

CHAIR LOPEZ stated that the request would be to add non-profits in the list of who the city can contract with, and to leave the language that refers to the enumeration of powers by the charter to not be exclusive. He suggested a change to charter section 1.03, to include other items in the list of roads, highways, parks, sewers, waterworks, public utilities, and buildings (when used for public purposes).

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK suggested generalizing the list further.

CHAIR LOPEZ proposed adding language for other physical assets such as public utilities like light poles, or vehicles. He asked if the enumeration of powers would include physical assets.

COMMITTEE MEMBER PAWLIK said that was a good idea, as there may be assets not known to the committee at this time that may come up in the future due to technological advances.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK asked if a general statement is required.

MS. WINKLER said there has been litigation over what powers a charter city has. She said she is not prepared to offer a legal opinion over that proposed edit.

CHAIR LOPEZ requested she return with opinions on what the committee discusses.

MS. WINKLER clarified if direction is to add additional specifically enumerated powers into the list in section 1.03.

CHAIR LOPEZ requested a statement that says other physical assets not listed in the charter, to provide for broader use beyond just the items listed.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK emphasized adding non-profit organizations into the list of entities that the city can enter into agreements with.

MR. PETERS advised that he read this section as applying to the city's intergovernmental agreements with other government entities for the purpose of maintaining particular assets. Adding in language here may remove the intent for the clause.

CHAIR LOPEZ stated that the committee will return to discuss suggested items in section 1.03 later.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ANGUIANO said one consideration for the future of the city is to consider what do non-physical assets look like due to technological advancements.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK suggested language to include any public purpose deemed by the Council to be in the interest of the city.

CHAIR LOPEZ asked if that would fit in charter section 1.03 or another section.

MR. PETERS said he thought it would fit under section 1.03.

MS. WINKLER added that she interpreted the section to allow Chandler to do anything legally that any city can do, and then it refers to intergovernmental agreements.

COMMITTEE MEMBER GORDWIN questioned if nonprofit organizations belong in the section about intergovernmental agreements.

MS. WINKLER said the city contracts with all kinds of entities including nonprofits and corporations, but it does not enter into intergovernmental agreements with them. Non-chartered cities have specific statutory authorization to enter into intergovernmental agreements. She suggested this language exists in the charter to ensure the charter city has the authority to enter into intergovernmental agreements. The section does not limit the city's ability to enter into contracts with other entities.

CHAIR LOPEZ asked if the city could receive gifts.

MS. WINKLER says the city can receive gifts, but it cannot give gifts. Historically, property has been donated to the city for a specific purpose. City-owned property cannot be given away.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Article II. City Council, 2.01 – 2.02
- Requirements of other Charter Cities

CHAIR LOPEZ commented on section 2.01 (c) on terms and wanted to ensure if the provision is not affected by a possible delay in the election.

MR. PETERS said this language may be left over when the city changed to consolidated election dates to provide continuity. Staff can research and return with more information as to why it was included.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK commented that the committee should move past this section as it may be affected by the passage of charter amendments in the November 2025 election. He suggested removing 2.01 (e) to remove extraneous language from prior charter amendment elections.

JENNIFER EKBLAD, Deputy City Clerk, clarified that language cleanup for charter sections 2.01 (f) and 2.01 (g) are also included in the proposed charter amendment ballot language for the November 2025 election.

MR. PETERS identified charter section 2.02 as an opportunity brought up for cleanup, where a salary increase may become effective following the next election. The proposed change would be for the increase to become effective following the next election, eliminating the six-month lead time requirement. It remains in place that a salary increase would not become effective until after the next Council is seated.

COMMITTEE MEMBER GORDWIN asked if it is known why a six-month delay was included in the first place.

MR. PETERS said the legislative history is unknown.

CHAIR LOPEZ commented that it may be a remnant of prior election schedules.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK suggested further clarification to denote a salary increase may become effective following the next city candidate election.

CHAIR LOPEZ questioned the sentence in section 2.02 reading “the mayor and councilmen shall receive their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties of office.”

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK suggested adding verbiage to include as determined by some authority.

MR. PETERS suggested as determined by ordinance. This may include mileage reimbursement for travel or costs incurred in performing the duties of councilmember.

CHAIR LOPEZ said some guardrail in capping councilmember budgets should be included.

MR. PETERS said staff will research options and return with an edit to this section.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK ensured that there was language in the charter explaining that the mayor does not have veto power.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Article II. City Council, 2.03 – 2.04

CHAIR LOPEZ asked about language in section 2.03 reading “the mayor shall from time to time communicate to the city council.”

COMMITTEE MEMBER GORDWIN said legally shall means must.

COMMITTEE MEMBER PAWLIK said the existing language of time to time gives too much leeway and should be changed.

MR. PETERS said staff will investigate. He read it to mean giving the state of the city address.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK suggested making the content in section 2.04 two sentences.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Article II. City Council, 2.05
- Requirements of other Charter Cities

CHAIR LOPEZ asked to clarify in section 2.05 (a) that a Chandler councilmember could be an employee of another city if they met the other requirements for councilmember. Clarification would be to add that a Chandler councilmember could not also be an employee of Chandler.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ANGUIANO asked about 2.05 (a) (1), if taking out nomination papers is the same as turning in papers.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKEY asked if this guideline has always been followed.

MR. PETERS said the proposed update would be to require resignation when nomination papers are filed, rather than taken out, and modify the primary election resignation trigger.

CHAIR LOPEZ supported the proposed update for 2.05.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK said section 2.05 (a) (2) should be clarified further.

MS. WINKLER suggested that can be clarified.

CHAIR LOPEZ spoke on section 2.05 (b) that manager refers to City Manager and should be edited for clarity.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK asked how the language in 2.05 (d) and other related sections can be cleaned up.

MR. PETERS recommended avoiding this section as it is politically sensitive.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Article II. City Council, 2.06
- Requirements of other Charter Cities

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK stated that language in 2.06 is left over from previous charter amendments and should be updated to include the next regularly scheduled candidate election to add clarity.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ANGUIANO asked if there has ever been a situation where Council has not appointed someone to a vacancy on Council within 30 days.

CHAIR LOPEZ said there have been times when the vacancy has not been able to be filled within the 30 days, which then triggers a special candidate election.

MR. PETERS explained the proposed update to 2.06 (c) is to expand the timeframe for filling the vacancy. It is consistent with other cities to have a 30-day timeframe.

CHAIR LOPEZ said historically the 30-day timeframe has been upheld by Council successfully. Having gone through it, he suggested expanding the timeframe.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK suggested 45 days.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKEY asked if the duties of Council would be affected by not having a full Council.

CHAIR LOPEZ said most likely it would not make that big of a difference. The consensus was to pursue 45 days. He stated if a vacancy is not filled within 30 days, a special election must be held within 120 days and asked if 120 days is still appropriate.

MS. EKBLAD said the city is required to hold an election on one of the consolidated election dates set by the state. More research may be needed to ensure it fits with Maricopa County election deadlines.

COMMITTEE MEMBER PAWLIK asked if language would have to change to note the inclusion of a vacancy election at the next consolidated election.

MR. PETERS said it is state law to adhere to consolidated election dates.

MS. WINKLER suggested staff do more research on a language change to work with the 45-day change suggested by the committee.

CHAIR LOPEZ asked about 2.06 (d) regarding temporary vacancies, if there were any other deadline other than the four months mentioned in the section. There have been situations where councilmembers have temporary vacancies and appointments due to active military duty

MS. WINKLER agreed that 2.06 (d) and 2.06 (e) are difficult to interpret. It could use some clean up to make it clear.

COMMITTEE MEMBER GORDWIN said there is an inconsistency between mentions of 120 days versus four months in this section.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK recommended changing the verbiage from the office of mayor to just mayor, to highlight the individual person in office. He also proposed changing the word telephonically to virtually.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Article II. City Council, 2.07 – 2.08
- Requirements of other Charter Cities

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK asked if the content regarding ordinances is better organized to go under the ordinance section of the charter.

MR. PETERS said the proposed update in section 2.08 is to eliminate the ordinance requirement, and instead authorize City Manager based on the necessity of operations. If the department is enumerated in city code by ordinance, then further ordinances to update the relevant city code is required for any change.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK opposed removing this responsibility from the Council.

MR. PETERS noted that other municipalities have different approaches to this strategy; some require an ordinance, while others do not. The pragmatic effect of this is that there are large code revisions anytime there is a reorganization in city departments.

CHAIR LOPEZ asked about the intent behind the proposed update.

MR. PETERS explained the intent is to have the City Manager consult with the City Council for ideas on reorganization. Changes in the past have been as result of retirements and retention, so department's responsibilities have been combined for efficiency. After outlining the needed updates, staff must go through city code and draft an ordinance update. This update is proposed to support efficiency.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK advised taking changes to Council by ordinance.

COMMITTEE MEMBER GORDWIN asked if City Council approves all salary increases.

MR. PETERS explained the City Manager has the authority to set salary increases, which City Council then would approve through the annual budget process.

COMMITTEE MEMBER GORDWIN asked if a change to the charter section 2.08 would affect the process of salary increases for city staff.

MR. PETERS said no.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKEY supported streamlining the speed of business while maintaining the intent of the charter.

CHAIR LOPEZ proposed a change in language that any significant changes of departments must seek Council approval.

MR. PETERS said any inclusion of language such as significant changes are interpretive. It is preferred to make things clear. Either the City Council has the authority to make changes by ordinance, or it does not.

MS. WINKLER said it might be possible to outline that the City Manager has the authority to organize city departments. Then they shall present departmental organization to the City Council for approval. This avoids codification by ordinance. She proposed revising the charter to allow the City Manager to make a proposal to change city departments in a resolution which would then be voted upon by City Council. She explained that resolutions do not affect city code, only ordinances do.

MS. EKBLAD added that ordinances have a different process of adoption than resolutions, including multiple readings and a later effective by date.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ANGUIANO supported looking into eliminating the ordinance requirement in favor of a resolution.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MCMULLAN asked if a resolution takes the same amount of time to become effective.

MS. EKBLAD said a resolution memorializes Council's decision.

The consensus was to pursue eliminating the ordinance requirement in favor of a resolution requirement.

CHAIR LOPEZ said the committee will continue discussion from section 2.09 at the next meeting, through section 6.

Calendar

3. The next Regular Meeting date, time, and location will be determined at the meeting.

The committee consensus was that the next regular meeting will be held on August 26, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers Conference room, pending location availability.

Public Comment

TERRI KIMBLE, President and CEO of the Chandler Chamber of Commerce, represents the business community in Chandler. The Chamber has formed a subcommittee of business leaders to share input to this committee regarding charter amendments. The Chamber subcommittee plans on issuing written comments to share their perspective. She requested clarification on section 2.06 of lawful removal from office.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Ryan Peters, Staff Liaison

René Lopez, Chair