

Meeting Minutes

City Council Study Session

February 23, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.
Chandler City Council Chambers
88 E. Chicago St., Chandler, AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kevin Hartke at 6:52 p.m.

Roll Call

Council Attendance

Mayor Kevin Hartke
Vice Mayor Angel Encinas
Councilmember Christine Ellis*
Councilmember Jane Poston
Councilmember Matt Orlando
Councilmember OD Harris
Councilmember Jennifer Hawkins

Appointee Attendance

John Pombier, City Manager
Kelly Schwab, City Attorney
Jennifer Ekblad, City Clerk

*Councilmember Ellis attended virtually.

Consent Agenda and Discussion

Budget and Policy

1. Resolution No. 5981, Adoption of Updated Pension Funding Policy
Move City Council pass and adopt Resolution No. 5981, adopting the updated Pension Funding Policy which accepts the city's share of assets and liabilities under the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) June 30, 2025, Actuarial Valuation Report.

City Clerk

2. Approval of Minutes
Move City Council approve the Council meeting minutes of the City Council Special Meeting held on February 2, 2026, the City Council Work Session held on February 2, 2026, the City

Council Study Session held on February 2, 2026, the City Council Work Session held on February 5, 2026, and the City Council Regular Meeting held on February 5, 2026.

3. Boards and Commissions Member Appointments
Move City Council approve the Board and Commission appointments as recommended.

City Manager

4. Resolution No. 5957, Authorizing the Agreement with Salt River Project to Conduct the Annual City of Chandler Family Bike Ride
Move City Council pass and adopt Resolution No. 5957 authorizing the execution of a license to use Salt River Project property, located at the consolidated canal between Germann Road and Chandler Boulevard, to conduct the annual City of Chandler Family Bike Ride.
5. Resolution No. 5974, Authorizing the Submittal of Applications for Indian Gaming Revenue Sharing Grant to Gila River Indian Community
Move City Council pass and adopt Resolution No. 5974 authorizing the submittal of Indian Gaming Revenue Sharing Grant Applications to Gila River Indian Community for \$320,125 for the Chandler Fire Department to purchase Hurst Combi Tools ("Jaws of Life") for Engine and Low Acuity units with newer E3 battery technology and \$187,047.25 for the Chandler Police Department to purchase a Gas Chromatograph/Mass Spectrometer (GCMS) to participate in the Global Uniform Analysis and Reporting of Drug-related Substances (GUARDS) .
6. Resolution No. 5975, Authorizing the Submittal Pass-Through Indian Gaming Applications to Gila River Indian Community
Move City Council pass and adopt Resolution No. 5975 authorizing the submittal of pass-through Indian Gaming Revenue Sharing Grant Applications to the Gila River Indian Community of \$25,000 from Arizona FACTS of LIFE for Summer Youth Program, \$183,000 from AZCEND for Drive to Deliver vehicle replacement, \$20,000 from Chandler Cultural Foundation for Connect Kids Program, \$130,000 from Chandler Education Foundation for Chandler Unified POW WOW, \$100,000 from Dignity Health Foundation for Oral Health Connect: Bridging Care from Hospital to Home, \$40,000 (\$20,000 per year for two years), from Firewheel STEM Institute for STEM Enrichment Programming, \$100,000 for Positive Youth Development, and \$25,000 from Matthew's Crossing for Emergency Food Assistance Programs.
7. Resolution No. 5976, Authorizing the Submittal Pass-Through Indian Gaming Applications Ft. McDowell Yavapai Nation
Move City Council pass and adopt Resolution No. 5976 authorizing the submittal of pass-through Indian Gaming Revenue Sharing Grant Applications to Ft. McDowell Yavapai Nation

of \$75,000 from AZCEND for NourishPlus Nutritional Program for seniors and adults with disabilities, and \$15,000 from Firewheel STEM Institute for Firewheel Mobile STEM Center.

8. Resolution No. 5977, Authorizing the Submittal Pass-Through Indian Gaming Application To Tohono O’odham Nation
Move City Council pass and adopt Resolution No. 5977 authorizing the submittal of pass-through Indian Gaming Revenue Sharing Grant Application to the Tohono O’odham Nation of \$50,000 from AZCEND for the Family Resource Center Early Literacy Program.
9. Resolution No. 5978, Authorizing the Submittal Pass-Through Indian Gaming Application To Ak-Chin Indian Community
Move City Council pass and adopt Resolution No. 5978 authorizing the submittal of pass-through Indian Gaming Revenue Sharing Grant Application to Ak-Chin Indian Community of \$150,000 from Dignity Health foundation for Histotripsy A Transformative Advance in Noninvasive Cancer Therapy.

MAYOR HARTKE announced that several attendees were invited for gaming grant items five through nine. He invited them to introduce themselves, and state the organization receiving the grant:

Sandra Bassett, Chandler Cultural Foundation – Connecting Kids Program and Camp Kids
Fredi Lajvardi, Firewheel STEM Institute
Jennifer Hewitt, Chandler Education Foundation
Yolanda Robinson, Arizona Facts of Life
Jennifer Francisco, Matthew’s Crossing Food Bank
Becky Hines, ICAN Positive Programs for Youth
Laurel Vetsch, Dignity Health Foundation East Valley
Shelley Nelson, AZCEND

10. Resolution No. 5986, Authorizing a Section 5310 Grant Application of \$90,000 for Chandler Flex Operations
Move City Council pass and adopt Resolution No. 5986, authorizing a grant application for and acceptance of grant funds from the Section 5310 federal grant program in the amount of \$90,000.
11. Resolution No. 5985, Authorizing SRP License Agreement for Kyrene Branch and Highline Canal Paths
Move City Council pass and adopt Resolution No. 5985 authorizing the execution of a license agreement with Salt River Project (SRP), granting the City access to construct, maintain and operate the Kyrene Branch and Highline Canal Shared Use Paths.

Community Services

12. Agreement for Park Restroom Cleaning Services
Move City Council approve Agreement No. CS5-910-4862, Amendment No. 1, with UBM Enterprise, Inc., for park restroom cleaning services, in an amount not to exceed \$183,500 for the period of one year beginning January 24, 2026, through January 23, 2027.

Fire Department

13. Purchase of Fire Turnouts and PPE
Move City Council approve Agreement No. FD2-340-4440, Amendment No. 3, with LN Curtis, Swift Group, Velocity Fire, and United Fire, for fire turnouts and PPE, in a combined amount not to exceed \$1,100,000, for a one-year term, February 1, 2026, through January 31, 2027.
14. Purchase of Ten Cardiac Monitors
Move City Council approve the purchase of ten cardiac monitors, from Zoll Medical Corporation, utilizing the State of Arizona Contract No. CTR073591, in an amount not to exceed \$592,642.73.
15. Purchase of Portable Radios for the Chandler Fire Department (CFD)
Move City Council approve the purchase of portable radios, from Motorola Solutions, utilizing the State of Arizona Contract No. CTR046830, in the amount of \$239,423.10.
16. Purchase of Fire Emergency Medical Supplies
Move City Council approve Agreement No. FD4-345-4690, Amendment No. 4, with Bound Tree Medical, LLC, for fire emergency medical supplies, in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000, for a one-year period, April 1, 2026, through March 31, 2027.

KEITH HARGIS, Assistant Fire Chief, presented an update on the EMS supply purchasing contract, which represents a significant increase compared to previous contracts. This increase is largely due to the ramp-up of the ambulance transportation service system being implemented in the community. The funding allocated will cover stocking the ambulances and ongoing supplies necessary to initiate the service during the first six months. Assistant Chief Hargis expressed gratitude to the City Council for its support of this transformative project, emphasizing its importance in enhancing emergency medical care and stabilizing healthcare access for residents. The entire department, along with the City Manager's Office, has been working diligently to ensure a successful rollout of the service. The approach to this initiative includes training for the department's members, drawing on their previous experience with ambulance operations. Additionally, the city has hired an ambulance transportation manager and an analyst, both of whom bring substantial expertise in the business side of EMS. Assistant Chief Hargis noted that 12 firefighters are currently undergoing training at the fire academy. The agenda also includes purchasing items such as cardiac monitors and radios specific to the ambulance service. Future contracts will focus on billing services essential for financial operations. The first of the ten new ambulances is expected to arrive in March, with additional units scheduled to come in batches

between May and September. This preparation aims to ensure the service is operational by January 2027.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS thanked the chief and expressed appreciation for the progress on the item. He stated that the initiative had once seemed stalled, but is now moving forward, where it can grow and succeed. He explained that the city is developing an important lifesaving service that had previously been handled through a third party. By bringing it in-house, the city will be able to provide residents with an even higher level of service while maintaining greater control over operations and participating directly in lifesaving efforts. Councilmember Harris also commended the Fire Department for its dedication to helping residents during their most difficult moments, noting the important role firefighters played during the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that this effort is especially important as the community's senior population continues to grow. He concluded by congratulating the department and saying he looks forward to the day the city sends out its first ambulance under the new program, adding that firefighters are cross trained as both firefighters and paramedics.

ASSISTANT CHIEF HARGIS confirmed that it was correct.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS asked for a brief overview of paramedic training, focusing on a few key responsibilities.

ASSISTANT CHIEF HARGIS explained that each fire truck currently has at least two paramedics and that firefighters also staff the ambulances operating in the city through a public-private partnership. In that arrangement, a third party provides the ambulance and EMT driver, while the city provides the firefighter-paramedic responsible for patient care. He said the new model will allow the city to take over the ambulance and driver roles, giving the department full control of operations. Additional training will be needed for EMTs to operate the vehicles and for documentation processes. Assistant Fire Chief Hargis added that reliable medical transportation is essential because patients cannot be transported in fire trucks. He said bringing the service in-house will allow the department to be more responsive and provide the best possible care, and that the team is excited and ready to move forward.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS thanked the department and stated that he was glad to partner in supporting the effort.

MAYOR HARTKE asked for confirmation that the program would not only improve service for residents but would also operate as an enterprise fund. He asked whether the additional revenue generated from ambulance transport would help offset the costs and ultimately support providing this service to the community.

ASSISTANT CHIEF HARGIS confirmed that the program is projected to operate as a self-sustaining enterprise fund and said it is expected to provide strong value to the community as it grows.

Human Resources

17. Agreement for Temporary Staffing Services

Move City Council approve Agreement No. HR9-962-4689, Amendment No. 2, with Marathon Staffing, for temporary staffing services, in an amount not to exceed \$1,079,378, for a one-year term, April 1, 2026, through March 31, 2027.

Information Technology

18. Purchase of Customer Engagement Portal and Relationship Management Software

Move City Council approve Agreement No. 4577, Amendment No. 1, with N. Harris Computer Corporation, for the implementation of Infinity CIS Version 5, to include the customer engagement portal and Solid Waste relationship management software, in an amount not to exceed \$1,095,512.

KRISTA MIKESELL, IT Application Services Manager, presented the following presentation.

- Utility Services Customer Engagement Portal
- Utility Billing Platform – History & Timeline
 - Planning
 - Software Upgrades
 - Move Cloud
 - Prepare
 - Customer Engagement Portal
 - Field Work Order System
 - System Configuration and Testing
 - Communication Strategy
 - 2014, 2023, 2025, 2026, 2027
 - Implementation
 - Internal Utility Billing System
 - Customer Engagement Portal
 - Field Work Order System
 - Prepare
 - Internal Utility Billing System
 - System Configuration and Testing
 - Cloud Implementation
 - Internal Utility Billing System
 - Customer Engagement Portal
 - Field Work Order System
- Current Customer Portal Limitations
 - Incompatible with the new cloud utility billing platform
 - System cannot be enhanced to meet future conservation needs
 - Platform is nearing end-of-life, increasing operational risk
 - Limited access to digital bill history
- Current Customer Engagement Portal (CEP)

- New CEP Key Features
 - Water usage displayed daily using Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI)
 - Enhanced water consumption graphs and visualizations
 - Utility billing graphs by dollar amounts
 - Ability to export usage and billing history to Excel
- New CEP Key Features
 - Mobile phone app capability
 - Expanded availability of billing images online
 - Improved paperless enrollment
 - Customizable dashboard
 - Exploring Move-In/Move-Out online request
- Graphs by Consumption Example
- Graphs by Billed Dollars Example
- Transaction History Example
- Personalized Alerts Example
- Community Approach
 - Internal Communications
 - Staff awareness and readiness updates
 - Training and support preparation
 - Community Communications
 - Advance notice of CEP launch
 - Education on portal benefits and features
 - Account setup guidance
 - Support and assistance resources
- Questions

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked whether the timeline was short because the city would be using off-the-shelf software that would be modified or because the city would be developing its own software.

MS. MIKESELL said the software is off the shelf.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO noted that the timeline seemed to indicate minimal work on the city's part and asked whether any tailoring or additional work would be required locally.

MS. MIKESELL confirmed that the city will need to work with IT and business units on configuration and integration once requirements are defined.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO inquired about how many cities or towns are currently utilizing this.

MS. MIKESELL noted that she knows at least one local contact and a few others but did not have their names available.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if they were experiencing any problems with the rollout of this initiative or anything related to it.

MS. MIKESELL noted that, to her knowledge, there are no issues with the rollout. She mentioned that another city in a different state has undergone a similar transition from an on-premises solution to a cloud-based system. Ms. Mikesell has a contact at that city who is more of an IT specialist, and she has been meeting with her regularly.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO expressed excitement about the project, noting that it could reduce residents' anxiety. He shared a personal story about quickly noticing a drop in his water bill, emphasizing the value of better tools for managing water resources. He said he looks forward to using the technology and asked whether the service would be accessible on both a computer and an app.

MS. MIKESELL confirmed that's correct.

MAYOR HARTKE stressed that the program will improve water tracking and protect resources and thanked everyone for their efforts.

19. Purchase of Fiber Equipment for Data Center Fiber Refresh
Move City Council approve the purchase of fiber equipment for the data center fiber refresh, utilizing the State of Arizona Contract No. CTR062464, with Tel Tech Networks Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$230,279.

Law

20. Settlement in Weinstein vs. City of Chandler
Move City Council approve the settlement in the matter of Weinstein vs. City of Chandler in full and final satisfaction of all claims asserted without admitting liability for the amount of \$350,000 and further authorize the City Attorney to sign any necessary documents in such forms as are approved by the City Attorney to effectuate the terms and conditions of settlement of this matter.

Management Services

21. Agreement for Phase 2 Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit Post-Construction Program Implementation
Move City Council approve Agreement No. 5042, with Hazen and Sawyer, PC, for the phase 2 municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permit post-construction program implementation, in an amount not to exceed \$190,000.
22. License Series 7, Beer and Wine Bar Liquor License Application for Theresa June Morse, Agent, Hotter, Drier, Broke-r, LLC, DBA Casual Pint

Move for recommendation to the State Department of Liquor Licenses and Control for approval of the State Liquor Job No. 375874, a Series 7, Beer and Wine Bar Liquor License, for Theresa June Morse, Agent, Hotter, Drier, Broke-r, LLC, DBA Casual Pint, located at 1095 W. Queen Creek Road, Suite 8, and approval of the City of Chandler, Series 7, Beer and Wine Bar Liquor License No. 311004.

23. New License Series 7, Beer and Wine Bar Liquor License Application for Andrea Dahlman Lewkowitz, Agent, Candeeland AZ, LLC, DBA Candeeland
Move for recommendation to the State Department of Liquor Licenses and Control for approval of the State Liquor Job No. 372003, a Series 7, Beer and Wine Bar Liquor License, for Andrea Dahlman Lewkowitz, Agent, Candeeland AZ, LLC, DBA Candeeland, located at 5955 W. Ray Road, Suite 15, and approval of the City of Chandler, Series 7, Beer and Wine Bar Liquor License No. 309189.

Neighborhood Resources

24. Resolution No. 5980, Approving an Amendment to Add the City of Goodyear as a Member of the Maricopa HOME Consortium
Move City Council pass and adopt Resolution No. 5980, amending the Maricopa HOME Consortium Intergovernmental Agreement (“IGA”) for the period of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2026, to add the City of Goodyear as a participating member.
25. Agreement for Non-Profit Blueprint Program
Move City Council approve Agreement No. 5037, with Chandler Chamber of Commerce, for the Non-Profit Blueprint program, in an amount not to exceed \$160,000, for the period of one year, beginning April 1, 2026, through March 31, 2027, with the option of up to four one-year extensions.

RIANN BALCH, Neighborhood Resources Director, presented the following presentation.

- The Nonprofit Blueprint
- Program Overview
 - Partnership between the Chandler Chamber of Commerce & City of Chandler to build capacity for eligible non-profit organizations serving Chandler
 - Cohort of 15 agencies will participate in four group training sessions, coaching sessions and networking activities over a none-month period
 - Focuses on improving systems, governance, and funding readiness
 - Each nonprofit completing the program receives a \$5,000 capacity-building award and a non-profit blueprint membership
- Group Training
 - Session 1 – Training and Governance
 - Session 2 – Strategies, Program and Impact
 - Session 3 - Funding and Financial Readiness
 - Session 4 – Communications and Sustainability

- Coaching and Technical Assistance
 - Writing or revising a strategic plan
 - Internal systems and process setup
 - Evaluation frameworks and data collection practices
 - Template creation (budgets, bylaws, strategic plan outlines)
 - Policy development assistance
 - Marketing material review
 - Website and social media guidance
- Capacity Building Award

Upon completing the program requirements, each participating nonprofit will receive a \$5,000 capacity-building award for:

 - Operational improvements
 - Consultant support
 - Technology upgrades
 - Staff & volunteer training
 - Marketing or communications needs
- Blueprint Membership Benefits

As part of the program, the Chandler Chamber will offer:

 - Professional headshots
 - Business & marketing resources
 - Opportunities for networking – free admission to Chamber networking events
 - Recognition by City of Chandler and Chandler Chamber of Commerce
- Anticipated Timeline
- Questions

MAYOR HARTKE noted that many small organizations seek city funds but often lack capacity or alignment with the city's vision. He expressed excitement about supporting nonprofits, thanked Ms. Balch and the Chamber, and looks forward to updates from the first cohort after September.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO inquired whether the selection criteria focus mainly on residents of Chandler or on Chandler-based businesses intending to start nonprofits.

MS. BALCH mentioned that the city is seeking organizations that serve Chandler residents. Some organizations may not be physically located in Chandler but still serve its residents, which is part of the eligibility criteria. Additionally, other criteria include factors like organization size, number of employees, and budget.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO noted that although the Chamber does strong work in many areas, he came to understand that the education component running this program operates as a separate 501(c) organization and is not directly connected to the Chamber's core business activities.

MS. BALCH confirmed that the Chandler Chamber Community Foundation applied for this program, bringing valuable knowledge and expertise.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO noted that, as shown on the slide, the program allows participants to network at events for educational and relationship-building purposes, with grants coming later. He asked if that aspect is included in the contract.

MS. BALCH stated that they do, and one of the reasons they consider the Chamber an ideal partner is because of its extensive network. The Chamber can effectively introduce emerging nonprofits to the broader Chandler community network, which is a significant advantage for them.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS asked whether participation in the program is a one-time opportunity or if individuals could repeat it under any circumstances.

MS. BALCH explained that the program is intended as a one-time, capacity-building initiative. Since this is our first year as a pilot, we haven't yet considered what might happen if a nonprofit returns in the future. This is a topic for further discussion, but the goal is to support 15 new organizations in the year.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS stated that he hopes Chandler-based nonprofits receive the opportunity, emphasizing that the funding comes from Chandler residents and should support local applicants.

Public Works and Utilities

26. Introduction and Tentative Adoption of Ordinance No. 5153, Approving the Abandonment of a Temporary Drainage Easement Located on the West Side of Lot 3, in the Chandler Airport Business Park that is no Longer Needed for Public Use
Move City Council introduce and tentatively adopt Ordinance No. 5153 approving the abandonment of a temporary drainage easement located on the west side of Lot 3, in the Chandler Airport Business Park that is no longer needed for public use.
27. Professional Services Agreement, Amendment No. 4, with Nfra, Inc., for the Delaware Street Parking Lot Improvements Design Services Located at 101 N Delaware Street, Chandler, AZ 85225
Move City Council award Professional Services Agreement No. ST2308.201, Amendment No. 4, to Nfra, Inc., for the Delaware Street Parking Lot Improvements Design Services, increasing the agreement amount by \$61,767.
28. Construction Services Agreement with Salt River Project (SRP), for the Chandler Heights Road Improvements (McQueen Road to Gilbert Road) Removal of Overhead Electrical Distribution Lines

Move City Council award Construction Services Agreement No. ST1614.512, SRP Contract No. 4224831, to SRP, for the Chandler Heights Road Improvements (McQueen Road to Gilbert Road) removal of overhead electrical distribution lines, in an amount not to exceed \$102,547.78.

29. Construction Services Agreement with Salt River Project (SRP), for the Chandler Heights Road Improvements (McQueen Road to Gilbert Road) Underground Conversion of the Electrical Distribution Lines

Move City Council award Construction Services Agreement No. ST1614.511, SRP Contract No. 4227459, to SRP, for the Chandler Heights Road Improvements (McQueen Road to Gilbert Road) underground conversion of electrical distribution lines, in an amount not to exceed \$782,712.

30. Rental of Belt Filter Press for the Pecos Surface Water Treatment Plant

Move City Council approve the competition impracticable purchase for the rental of a belt filter press, from Phoenix Process Equipment Co., for a period of two years, in an amount not to exceed \$392,300.

Action Agenda

31. Resolution No. 5966, Amending the Citywide Fee Schedule relating to Community Services, Cultural Development, Police, and Public Works & Utilities Departments
Move City Council pass and adopt Resolution No. 5966 amending the Citywide Fee Schedule relating to Community Services, Cultural Development, Police, and Public Works & Utilities Departments, with fee changes effective March 2, 2026.

Public Hearing

32. Proposed Local Alternative Expenditure Limitation - Home Rule Option Election, Second Public Hearing
1. Open Public Hearing
 2. Staff Presentation
 3. Council Discussion
 4. Discussion from the Audience
 5. Close Public Hearing

Discussion

33. Discussion of Implementing an Ethics Policy and Possible Direction to Staff to Review and Return with Recommendations, as Requested by Councilmember Poston

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON explained that she brought this item forward to request staff time to research an ethics policy for the Council, emphasizing that it affects the entire. She noted that

ethics policies are standard in large organizations, employees are expected to follow them, and it's reasonable for the Council to do the same. She said the idea has been raised by the community and partners, including the Chandler Chamber of Commerce listing it in their legislative agenda document "How We Stand", and discussed previously by the charter committee, though she doesn't believe the charter is the right place for it. She noted that other cities, like Mesa, have robust policies covering both councils and boards. Councilmember Poston clarified that she is not proposing a specific policy tonight but is seeking a discussion and direction for staff to explore options. She outlined that it could take various forms, such as a charter amendment, resolution, ordinance, or Council policy, and stressed that the goal is proactive planning to prevent future issues rather than addressing a current problem. She invited fellow councilmembers to discuss.

MAYOR HARTKE asked for clarification on Councilmember Poston's last point, noting that he wondered what specific problem the policy is intended to solve. He acknowledged that no current issue exists but asked her to give an example of what such an ethics policy could address or accomplish.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON explained that ethics policies can range from detailed to more general and could address topics such as social media conduct or the acceptance of meals. She said the primary reason for exploring the policy is that community members have asked Council to look into it. She added that the City Charter Amendment Resident Advisory Committee and the Chamber of Commerce have both spent significant time discussing the topic, and she believes it is important for the Council to be responsive to the community by reviewing the issue and considering possible options.

MAYOR HARTKE asked again what specific problem the policy is intended to solve. He asked whether there is a particular issue the policy would address, or whether the intent is simply to explore whether a problem exists and determine whether a policy is needed.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said she is seeking to establish a process before any issue arises, emphasizing the importance of proactivity rather than reactivity. She noted that community members, along with two respected organizations, have asked the Council to consider the topic, and she believes it is appropriate for the Council to review it now and plan for the future.

MAYOR HARTKE asked whether it might make sense to refer the issue back to the Charter Review Committee to reconsider and bring back recommendations, noting that there is time between now and June for them to revisit it.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said she does not believe the Charter Review Committee is the appropriate place to revisit the issue because its role is focused on matters that belong in the city charter. She explained that she is not convinced an ethics policy should be placed in the charter and noted it could instead take other forms, such as an ordinance, a commission, a resolution, or a council policy and procedure. She added that the committee already had discussion on the topic

and that placing it on the ballot as a charter amendment may not be the right approach within a short timeframe. Instead, she believes city staff are better positioned to review the issue, conduct research, and provide options for the Council to consider.

MAYOR HARKE said his concern is that if changes are made outside the charter, they may not be enforceable. He noted that ordinances can be changed by future councils and questioned whether an ordinance would provide sufficient authority, particularly if the issue involves discipline. He said that is why he is raising the question.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON responded that the Council has already signed an anti-bullying and anti-harassment policy that does not necessarily include strong enforcement mechanisms. She said that if enforcement is a concern, the Council could examine that as well, but she would prefer to take a broader look at developing an overall ethics policy.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO inquired whether there is an ethics policy for the staff.

KELLY SCHWAB, City Attorney, explained that the city has various personnel rules and administrative regulations that guide staff conduct, including ethical matters, social media use, and participation in elections. She noted that, while there is no single formal ethics policy, many of these standards are addressed throughout existing rules and regulations.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said reviewing the issue is a good place to start and that he supports examining what already exists. He noted he was not aware of the current policies mentioned and said the Council could consider something simple, even if it were placed in the charter, though he was not specifically recommending that approach. He emphasized that this request is simply for additional information and discussion, similar to other requests made by councilmembers that require staff time. He said the Council does not yet know what the outcome might look like, whether a resolution, policy, ordinance, or another approach, but believes it is reasonable to conduct due diligence, review what is already in place, and then discuss the findings in a future work session before deciding whether to move forward.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS said she sees value in going through the charter because residents should have input on what a Council ethics policy looks like and what they expect. She shared a concern that a policy without enforcement may not have a meaningful impact.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said her main concern is that an ethics policy could be misused by the Council to target each other. She noted that without involving the public through the charter, enforcement would fall to councilmembers themselves, which could lead to disputes over personal or professional actions unrelated to official duties. She emphasized that accountability already exists when councilmembers act in their official roles, but the Council should not interfere with personal or business matters outside of their city responsibilities. She stated that if an ethics

policy moves forward, it should go through the charter process so residents can provide input and ultimately decide its validity.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said she values the diverse opinions on the topic, noting that her own research revealed many possible approaches. She explained that while the Charter Committee could be involved, city staff are better positioned to thoroughly review the issue and provide guidance, as it falls within their expertise and resources. She emphasized that staff could start by reviewing the Charter Committee's prior work and the Chamber's recommendations, both of which carry significant input. She clarified that she does not see one group as better than the other but believes city staff should lead the review rather than convening the Charter Committee quickly, which would not allow enough time for a thoughtful process.

MAYOR HARTKE asked City Attorney Kelly Schwab for the Charter Committee's timeline if the Council wanted to place something on the next election ballot, specifically, whether the deadline is in June.

JENNIFER EKBLAD, City Clerk, confirmed that June 22 is the deadline for ballot language for the next election.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said this was the first time hearing that the Chandler Chamber of Commerce had requested the City Council establish an ethics committee. She stated that the Chamber's president had never approached her on the matter and that she had not been asked for an opinion or input. Councilmember Ellis also questioned which organizations Councilmember Poston was referring to as requesting it.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said the topic came from Charter Committee discussions and is included in the Chandler Chamber's "How We Stand" document, developed by committees of Chamber members and volunteers. Councilmember Poston clarified that the request was only for staff to review the issue, not to propose a specific policy.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said she had attended the Chandler Chamber's "How We Stand" committee meetings for several years and noted that ethics had not been a major focus. She asked what specific issues an ethics committee would address and whether topics like donations, meals, or councilmember conduct might be included.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON noted the issue had appeared in the Chandler Chamber's "How We Stand" document before. She emphasized the importance of reviewing it to understand what prompted its inclusion and the concerns behind it. She noted that Terri Kimble, Chandler Chamber President/CEO, said the issue has been in the Chamber's "How We Stand" document for several years. She emphasized understanding why it resurfaced, consulting Chamber members, and listening to stakeholders, not any single organization, while remaining open to Councilmember Ellis's points.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked the City Manager whether staff have the capacity to quickly review this issue, given current demands from home rule, elections, and ongoing planning.

JOHN POMBIER, City Manager, said he appreciates the question and noted that staff is currently busy in the budget season. He explained that whether the task comes from the Charter Committee or the Council, staff would handle the necessary work. If it becomes a Council priority, staff will do their best to meet the Mayor and Council's needs despite their current workload.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked if staff would still handle the work if the matter is sent back to the Charter Committee.

MR. POMBIER confirmed that staff supports the Charter Committee and would conduct any necessary research or investigations, bringing the results back to the committee. He noted that committee members could also do their own research or request staff assistance.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said staff will be involved whether this discussion was brought to the Charter Resident Advisory Committee or if it was done due to Councilmember request.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said that as a councilmember, she could ask staff to spend about four hours researching the issue. She acknowledged being surprised by the differing perspectives and agreed with Councilmember Ellis that it is concerning when policies are misused in other cities. She added that this Council is well-respected and well-suited to proactively review the matter. She noted that while she was willing to dedicate staff time to research, she felt this discussion with the full Council was the appropriate forum to gather feedback.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS said that as elected officials, they have a responsibility to lead the city and be accountable to residents. He views this as a matter of accountability and transparency and is open to learning more about what an ethics mechanism might look like. He raised questions about its structure, timing, boundaries, who could file a claim, and what consequences would follow if a claim were validated. He said he is open to staff researching the issue and bringing the findings back to the Council.

MAYOR HARTKE asked the City Attorney to clarify the rules, noting that a single councilmember can request up to four hours of staff time, but anything beyond that requires a majority of the Council. He then asked what a good approach would be to determine whether there is Council interest in pursuing this issue, given that it is Monday and the Council meets again on Thursday.

MS. SCHWAB explained that because the issue affects the Council, staff needs majority direction to proceed. The topic can be discussed in a study session and revisited on Thursday for guidance. If an ordinance or resolution is needed, direction would be given then, but nothing would be ready by Thursday, only discussion and initial guidance.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS asked the City Attorney to explain the Council's existing onboarding process for transparency and conflict of interest law. Councilmember Harris noted that if a councilmember is business owner, they must disclose contracts and business relationships within the city. The City Attorney then advises if a vote presents a direct conflict. He requested a summary of the key disclosures and guidance normally provided to new councilmembers.

MS. SCHWAB explained that during onboarding, she meets with each councilmember individually to review key requirements. This includes Arizona's open meeting law, how to conduct meetings without violations, and conflict of interest law, including potential legal penalties for violations. She noted that ongoing dialogue is maintained to address any concerns about conflicts. She also reviewed the city's anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies, council rules and procedures governing agenda items and staff time, and charter requirements specifying that the city manager directs staff while the Council handles operational matters through the manager.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS explained that he asked the question to better understand the existing guidance and requested that the City Manager outline the city's rules and policies related to ethics, noting that the City Attorney had already covered some of the topic.

MR. POMBIER said the city has administrative regulations and policies that guide how employees interact with the public and each other. While they don't create a formal ethics policy, these rules outline expected behavior, including restrictions on gifts, and are updated as new situations arise. He cited bullying and sexual harassment policies as examples that help establish the ethical standards for employees at work.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS said Council rules and staff policies already guide actions, but he questioned whether Councilmember Poston had used her four-hour staff limit and if more time was needed. He suggested using the Charter Committee, which already has staff support, to address the issue. Councilmember Harris emphasized clearly defining the problem, noted existing accountability through elections and resident input, and cautioned against policies that could be misused.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked the Council whether members wanted to include or exclude people who have opinions on the issue but are not part of the Charter Committee. She noted this is why she prefers starting with staff before moving to the committee. She also agreed with Councilmember Orlando's suggestion to begin by reviewing existing city staff policies but emphasized that input from those who have been engaged with the issue for seven years should also be considered.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS said he thinks the process should start with Councilmember Poston using her allotted four hours of staff time. He explained that she should direct staff, gather information, and then return to the Council with what was accomplished. If more time is needed, additional hours could be requested later. Councilmember Harris emphasized that using the four

hours first ensures staff work is focused and productive, rather than seeking Council approval before any consensus. He explained that her four hours of staff time allows her to define the problem, give staff direction, and gather information efficiently. Councilmember Harris suggested she use that time first, and if more is needed, she can return to the Council to request additional hours. This ensures that any staff work is focused and tied to a clearly identified problem before seeking broader Council support.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON stated that she is asking the Council as a whole to lead on this issue, not her personally.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said that the main challenge isn't the amount of staff time, but implementing a policy that affects the Council. Councilmember Orlando asked whether there were any issues leading Council to implement the anti-bullying policy or non-discrimination ordinance.

MS. SCHWAB said she is not aware of any specific issues.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked whether there was a specific issue that prompted the adoption of the non-discrimination ordinance.

MS. SCHWAB said she is not aware of any specific issue that prompted the adoption of the non-discrimination ordinance.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said those policies were educational, providing guidelines so that if bullying or discrimination occurred, there would be a document outlining how to handle it. He noted that this is essentially what Councilmember Poston is saying.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS said he is not disagreeing with the idea or the principle behind it.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said the purpose of policies like anti-bullying and non-discrimination ordinances is not to address a specific problem, but to provide guidance in case an issue arises. He explained that the proposed ethics policy would serve the same proactive purpose. He emphasized that the Council is simply asking questions, gathering information, and exploring options, such as whether the charter could address it before making any decisions. He suggested moving forward to get answers so the Council can deliberate, noting that they may ultimately decide to proceed or not.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS said his concern isn't with the policy itself, but with ensuring a clear and effective process. He suggested that Councilmember Poston use her allotted four hours of staff time to gather information, define the problem, and direct staff. Once that work is complete, she can return to the Council to request additional time if needed. Councilmember Harris emphasized that staff should receive specific guidance rather than broad directions, so the Council can later have a productive discussion and develop a targeted policy that addresses the problem.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said she has repeatedly explained that the problem she's trying to address comes from resident concerns and that she is being responsive. Councilmember Poston noted that her efforts so far raised more questions than answers, which is why she brought it to Council. She said she is willing to lead with discretion if the Council directs it.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said that bullying and discrimination were real issues in the community, citing schools, students, and residents as examples, even if there wasn't a specific complaint on Council. She emphasized that past policies were meant to address these broader problems and elevate standards within the Council as well. Councilmember Ellis agreed that Councilmember Poston has shown a willingness to do the work and said she supports following a similar process, engaging staff to gather the necessary information, so Council can determine if this initiative is something they can collectively support.

MAYOR HARTKE said thanked councilmembers for the discussion and the documents provided. He noted that he started the conversation and had worked with staff on the anti-bullying policy, emphasizing his concern about Council or board members acting inappropriately toward staff. He said he does not sense a consensus tonight and suggested the Council reconvene on Thursday to give direction. Mayor Hartke stressed that before moving forward with an ethics committee, the Council needs to clarify the scope, whether it involves a charter change like in Tempe or Mesa, or codifying rules such as limits on gifts. He encouraged narrowing the focus and gathering input from other councilmembers before Thursday so the discussion can be more deliberate, but noted it is not any one councilmember's job to decide alone.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON thanked everyone for the discussion and said the diversity of opinions reinforced why she brought the issue to Council. She emphasized that she believes this is a Council decision and wanted to ensure that, if the Council does not direct staff, there is at least comfort with her leading the effort individually. Councilmember Poston explained that she did not feel comfortable using her four hours to direct staff alone on a matter affecting the entire Council, and she still believes the best approach is for the Council as a body to provide guidance. She said she would prepare before Thursday's meeting to clarify next steps.

MAYOR HARTKE clarified that the decision will ultimately be made by the full Council. He explained that what is being requested of Councilmember Poston is to use her allotted staff hours to gather more research and develop a proposal, which she can then present to the Council for further discussion and potential approval. He noted that this process of individual councilmember hours for research is available to all councilmembers for various purposes.

Informational

34. Special Event Liquor Licenses and Temporary and Permanent Extensions of Liquor License Premises Administratively Approved

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

ATTEST: *Jennifer Ehlbaek*
City Clerk

Kevin Harthe
Mayor

Approval Date of Minutes: March 23, 2026

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Chandler, Arizona, held on the 23rd day of February 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DATED this 23rd day of March, 2026.

Jennifer Ehlbaek
City Clerk

