

Meeting Minutes

City Council Work Session

April 6, 2026 | 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 4:37 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
Tawn Kao, Deputy City Attorney
Jennifer Ekblad, City Clerk

Staff in Attendance

Tadd Wille, Assistant City Manager
Dawn Lang, Deputy City Manager / Chief Financial Officer
Ryan Peters, Deputy City Manager
Leah Powell, Deputy City Manager
Matt Burdick, Communications & Public Affairs Director
Marge Zylla, Strategic Initiatives Director
Jenny Winkler, Assistant City Attorney
Micah Miranda, Economic Development Director

Discussion

1. Second Discussion and Presentation of the City Charter Amendment Resident Advisory Committee Recommendations

MAYOR HARTKE called for a staff presentation.

JOHN POMBIER, City Manager, introduced the discussion item.

RYAN PETERS, Deputy City Manager, presented the following presentation.

- City Charter Amendment Recommendations
- Background
 - The City Charter Amendment Resident Advisory Committee was established by City Council in June 2025 to make recommendations on potential charter amendments to be considered for referral to the voters.
 - Members of the committee include:
 - Chair Rene Lopez
 - Pastor Brad Davis
 - Heather Anguiano
 - Ursula Gordwin
 - Sherida McMullan
 - Lisa Askey
 - Jim Jurnak
 - Jennifer Pawlik
 - Allison Stewart
- Committee Review and Recommendation Process
 - Committee Reviewed Charter, Identified Opportunities for Revision, and Directed Staff to Draft Amendment Language for Consideration (July – December 2025)
 - Council Work session: Committee Chair Report Council Directs Staff to Prioritize Recommendations February 2, 2026
- Recommendation No. 1 Clarify Timing of Vice Mayor Selection (Section 2.03)
 - Description: Provides additional clarity regarding the timing of the selection of the vice-mayor by codifying a long-standing past practice of the City Council.
 - Key Changes: Clarifies that the vice-mayor is selected at the first regular City Council meeting in January of each year, rather than within a specified number of days (31 days).
 - Committee Vote: Not applicable – staff recommendation. **staff recommendation
- Other Charter City Comparisons

MAYOR HARTKE stated that this appeared to be a straightforward step, aligning with practices followed for the past 16 years, and asked Council whether there were any concerns or if all Councilmembers were comfortable with the proposal.

RYAN PETERS, Deputy City Manager, said staff would prepare the recommendations for a future Council meeting, where the language would be presented and voted on, noting consensus to move the item forward.

Council was in consensus for Recommendation No. 1 Clarify Timing of Vice Mayor Selection (Section 2.03).

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Recommendation No. 2 – Residency requirement for department directors (Section 9.03).
 - Description: Eliminates requirement that department heads establish residency in the city within six months of appointment; continues residency requirement for city manager; authorizes council to require residency as a condition for any other position council appoints
 - Key Changes: Removes automatic residency requirement for department directors.
 - Committee Vote: 5-2 recommendation.
- Other Charter City Comparisons

MAYOR HARTKE sought Council's input and noted that Councilmember Ellis supported applying the requirement to the city manager while eliminating it for directors and other appointed officials.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said she had been hesitant but generally supported residency expectations for department heads due to the importance of community engagement. She noted she had been persuaded to relax that view for department heads but still believed Council appointed officials should live in the city. She added that some roles, such as the fire and police chiefs, may require special consideration and suggested a companion policy for emergency response timing. She supported maintaining the current practice for appointed officials.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS stated he recommended keeping the current residency requirements for department directors and direct reports within the city. He expressed openness to extending the timeframe for establishing residency beyond six months, potentially to 12 to 18 months, but emphasized the importance of having directors and key staff living in the community.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS agreed with the residency requirement for city manager but expressed concern that broader residency rules for other positions could limit the city's ability to recruit and retain employees. She noted that requiring relocation could create financial and personal considerations for candidates and impact Chandler's competitiveness as an employer. She was open to further discussion on residency for certain roles, such as the police and fire chiefs, but did not see a need for additional requirements for other direct reports at this time.

MAYOR HARTKE asked for clarification on her position, noting alignment with Councilmember Ellis and asking about other direct reports.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS responded that she did not believe additional residency requirements were necessary given the city's size and current circumstances.

MAYOR HARTKE confirmed her general alignment with Councilmember Ellis's position, with other requirements potentially addressed through direction to the city manager.

MR. POMBIER stated he had considered a management policy for all directors, requiring them to live within a 30-minute response area to City Hall and maintain a level of community presence through events and engagement.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON said her opinion in the past had changed when considering that many households have two working family members, that it is difficult to decide where to move between them.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO supported requiring the four direct hires to be city residents, with flexibility to extend the timeline to one year. He favored allowing other department heads to live within a reasonable radius, noting the city's growth has changed past residency needs. He added that many senior hires already relocate to Chandler and concluded that residency should apply to the top four direct reports, while other directors could live outside the city.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS said he supported requiring the four direct hires to live in Chandler, but preferred a more flexible, proximity-based approach rather than a strict city-limit requirement. He noted concern about overly rigid rules affecting employees who may already live very close to city boundaries and suggested a reasonable distance or response-time standard, such as a 30-minute radius. He expressed no concern with a clearly defined policy for directors' residency and supported establishing an appropriate standard for proximity.

MAYOR HARTKE stated there was consensus for the four direct hires to reside in Chandler.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked whether a one-year timeframe would be more appropriate for the city manager and others relocating.

MR. POMBIER stated that a one-year timeframe would be more practical and help avoid the need for exceptions. He recommended maintaining flexibility for the city manager position and noted that using a contract rather than the charter would allow Council greater discretion during recruitment without limiting options.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO stated that he wanted residency requirements to be clearly communicated upfront to avoid unfairly surprising candidates later in the process. He suggested including the requirement in the charter for transparency.

MR. POMBIER responded that the city could instead express a preference for residency during recruitment. He recommended leaving the final decision to Council.

MAYOR HARTKE asked whether a one-year requirement was acceptable, noting that direct hires would have one year to move into the city, while department heads could live within proximity. He asked if any roles, such as police chief, needed further discussion.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON supported a broader approach and emphasized community involvement.

MAYOR HARTKE inquired whether anything was missing.

MR. PETERS deferred to the city attorney for clarification on drafting direction.

JENNY WINKLER, Assistant City Attorney, explained that director-level positions would follow city manager policy, while the charter would remove the residency requirement for directors, retain it for the city manager, and clarify requirements for the other appointed positions.

MR. POMBIER suggested that the language could be written more generally so that if additional appointed roles were added in the future, the provision would not need to be revised.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Recommendation No. 3 – “Resign to Run” & Filling Council Vacancies (Sections 2.05 & 2.06)
 - Description: The proposed changes bring the charter’s “resign to run” provisions in line with Arizona state law (ARS 38-296) by requiring the mayor or a councilmember intending to run for any other public office to resign upon filing nomination papers for that office.
 - Key Changes: Resign to Run: Brings local rules in line with ARS 38-296, which deems an incumbent to have offered themselves for nomination/election (triggering resignation) specifically on the "filing of a nomination paper" (per ARS 38-296(B)).
 - Vacancy Filling: Provisions for filling vacancies in the office of mayor or councilmember are consolidated under Section 2.06. The council has 45 days to fill the vacancy; otherwise, it is filled at the forthcoming election or, if no election is forthcoming, at a special election held as soon as practicable.
 - Committee Vote: Unanimous recommendation.
- Other Charter City Comparisons

MAYOR HARTKE asked whether there were any questions about aligning the charter with state requirements, removing ambiguity, and basing it on the official filing date rather than the date the process started.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS questioned whether the item was necessary for the ballot, noting that the city already follows state law in practice.

MS. WINKLER clarified that the city adheres to state law rather than the ambiguous language of the city charter.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS expressed concern about limiting the number of items under consideration due to potential ballot fatigue for voters.

MAYOR HARTKE explained that in past charter amendment elections, amendments were made to bring the city charter in alignment to state law.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS said he was evaluating each recommendation on its priority and wondered if all proposals would move forward at this time.

MAYOR HARTKE responded that the proposals were being prioritized and that staff would likely recommend a more limited set.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS reiterated that he was trying to gauge consensus and determine whether the item belonged among the top priorities, noting that it may already be handled through current practice.

MAYOR HARTKE stated that the proposal aligned with the charter and asked whether others had concerns.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said the language should be clarified and warned that strict charter wording could create legal and political conflicts if candidates were challenged for holding or seeking office. He expressed concern about potential disputes and repeated legal challenges and suggested keeping broader language to avoid future complications and litigation.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS spoke in favor of the item, stating she had no issue.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS spoke in favor of the item, stating she had no issue.

MAYOR HARTKE spoke in favor of the second part of the recommendation, which would change the timeframe from 30 days to 45 days, as the committee recommended.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS spoke in favor of extending the timeframe to 45 days, stating it would allow more time to thoroughly vet candidates, including background checks, resumes, and community involvement, and give Council greater confidence in appointments.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS spoke in favor of keeping the 30-day timeframe, noting that other cities appear to operate within similar timelines and that the process could be adequately completed within 30 days.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO spoke in favor of maintaining 30 days, stating that it provides sufficient time for appointments and helps keep the process focused, avoiding extended timelines that could become more politically influenced.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON spoke in favor of the 30-day timeframe, noting that it would bring the tie-breaker process into effect sooner rather than later.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS spoke in favor of allowing more time, stating that while she understood the argument for 30 days, she preferred having a longer timeframe to avoid rushing the process and provide additional flexibility if needed.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS stated he was not tied to either the 30-day or 45-day timeframe.

MAYOR HARTKE stated that prior Council replacements were handled in a timely manner and expressed support for maintaining consistency, indicating he was fine with the 30-day timeframe.

Council was in consensus to include a resign to run requirement, and Council vacancy filling within 30 days.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Recommendation No. 4 – Elimination of the “Two-Readings” Requirement for Ordinances (Section 2.15).
 - Description: Eliminates the requirement that the city council consider an ordinance twice – as introduced and as adopted.
 - Key Changes: Removes the requirement for ordinances to be considered twice by the City Council.
 - Committee Vote: Unanimous recommendation.
- Other Charter City Comparisons

MAYOR HARTKE asked for clarification on which types of items still require a second reading, citing examples such as ordinance changes, and noted that second readings are often used as a matter of principle after initial debate. He inquired whether there were additional categories beyond penalties where public input should take precedence over speed of implementation.

MR. PETERS responded that items involving fees and penalties or new or increased offenses would be key exceptions.

MAYOR HARTKE referenced prior ordinances, such as those related to animals and weapons, and asked if those would fall under this category.

MR. PETERS said yes.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked whether items like wastewater and water rates were included.

JENNY WINKLER, Assistant City Attorney, clarified that those are set by resolution.

DAWN LANG, Deputy City Manager / CFO, clarified that with the exception of utilities, state law does require an ordinance.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO stated that, under the proposal, most items would no longer require

a second reading except for matters such as taxes, fees, penalties, plats, or general plans, and he requested clarification on any additional applicable categories.

MR. PETERS confirmed that implementation would involve removing the second-reading requirement from the charter while establishing a code-based process to preserve two readings for ordinance types involving penalties.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked how the change would be explained to voters so they understood that only certain types of ordinances, not those affecting daily life, would be impacted.

MS. WINKLER explained that the charter would be amended to remove the second-reading requirement, and a subsequent code amendment would specify which categories would still require two readings.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked whether those provisions would be included in the ballot language.

MR. PETERS responded that the recommendation was solely to eliminate the second-reading requirement, while any retention of second readings for specific categories would be handled separately through a parallel code amendment process, not within the ballot itself.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if future Councils could amend the city code relating to what types of ordinances required two readings.

MR. PETERS said that was correct.

MAYOR HARTKE stated he supported the proposal for "speed of business," while maintaining a framework to codify which ordinances are considered significant and require additional review.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS spoke in favor of this amendment.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS opposed the change, stating a preference to maintain the existing second-reading process.

COUNCILMEMBER HAWKINS spoke in favor of removing the second reading requirement with the understanding that certain categories would still be outlined for additional review.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO expressed support for the compromise language, noting that while routine items may not require extensive public input, matters with financial impacts should still allow for community participation.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS stated he was generally supportive of the proposal but cautioned about

voter fatigue and the risk of overwhelming the ballot with too many measures.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON expressed mixed feelings but ultimately supported the streamlined approach, noting that the second reading can sometimes provide valuable public input, but she was open to the proposed compromise.

MAYOR HARTKE noted general agreement and indicated there may still be additional input on specific items, but not on the overall direction of the decision.

MR. PETERS said other than those that Council has suggested modification for, there is draft language that the charter committee voted to recommend that could be provided to Council.

MR. POMBIER stated that in response to Council concerns about ballot fatigue and requests for recommendations, staff recommended advancing the first four items, while placing the next four in a lower-priority tier. He noted that Council could still choose to move them forward.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Recommendation No. 5 – Add “gender” and “other protected status” as bases for prohibited discrimination (Section 9.02).
 - Description: Expands prohibited discrimination grounds.
 - Key Changes: Adds “gender” and “other protected status” to existing list.
 - Committee Vote: Unanimous recommendation.
- Other Charter City Comparisons

MAYOR HARTKE asked for consensus on the staff recommendation. Councilmembers Ellis, Harris, and Poston indicated that the item did not need to be referred to the ballot.

VICE MAYOR ENCINAS asked whether recommendations five, six, and seven could be combined into a single item on the ballot.

MR. PETERS responded that they could be combined into a single question but explained that staff had intentionally separated them to preserve distinct voting opportunities and avoid conflating different changes. He added that additional items were also separated due to differences, such as gender-neutral language updates, consistency in grammar and formatting, and the elimination of outdated charter sections that still serve as historical references.

Council consensus was to not move forward with recommendation five.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Recommendation No. 6 – Gender Neutrality, Grammar, Punctuation, Capitalization, & Elimination of Legalese
 - Description: Non-substantive changes to modernize and ensure consistency

throughout the Charter.

- Key Changes: Applies across Articles II-X (e.g., gender neutrality, grammar/punctuation fixes, removal of legalese, consistent capitalization).
- Adds words like “city” before “manager” or “council”.
- Committee Vote: Unanimous recommendation.
- Visual: Green highlights from original summary.
- Other Charter City Comparisons

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked whether the change had already been made for a councilmember previously.

MAYOR HARTKE explained in the city charter and code, there is a footnote that notes gender neutral language is to be applied to words such as “councilman” that remained in the charter.

MR. PETERS stated that route had historically been used because the volume of words that would be removed would be high. It was considered a cleaner way to apply changes throughout. He added that updated legal guidance indicates that the full text changes need not appear on the ballot; only the question itself is required.

MR. WINKLER added that while the ballot itself may not include all text changes, voters would still receive a publicity pamphlet showing the full charter with all amendments, and strikethroughs since the changes are distributed throughout the document.

Council consensus was to not move forward with recommendation six.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Recommendation No. 7 – Clarifying Changes
 - Description: Changes to clarify existing provisions, align with state law, and remove outdated initial-adoption language.
 - Key Changes: Article I: Clarifies contract authority.
 - Article II: Clarifies reimbursement policies, city employment prohibition, petition rights, eliminates outdated utility rate references.
 - Article X: Strikes obsolete initial-adoption sections.
 - Committee Vote: Unanimous recommendation.
 - Visual: Blue highlights from original summary.
- Other Charter City Comparisons

MAYOR HARTKE asked for clarification on Article 10 in the city charter.

MR. PETERS stated that Article 10 defines the city’s original corporate boundaries and the freeholders who were nominated to form the city and establish the charter.

MAYOR HARTKE asked for Council consensus on item 7. Council was not in favor of moving forward with recommendation eight.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Recommendation No. 8 – Authorization to Reorganize City Departments with Council Approval (Sections 2.08 & 2.13)
 - Description: Authorizes the city manager to establish and organize the offices and departments of the city subject to the review and approval of the city council
 - Key Changes: Eliminates ordinance requirement for establishing or altering city departments and provides for council review and approval of city manager's proposed changes by resolution
 - Committee Vote: 5-2 recommendation
- Other Charter City Comparisons

MAYOR HARTKE asked for council consensus on item 8. Council was not in favor of moving forward with recommendation eight.

MR. PETERS stated that the first four items, including the modifications made, would be brought back to Council at a later date for consideration of ballot placement at a future election.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Next Steps – Council Direction
 - Council Feedback Requested:
 - Items to move forward
 - Items to modify
 - Items to remove
 - Provide direction on alternative language to prepare
 - Staff Will:
 - Revise language per direction
 - Prepare versions for future Council action
- 2026 Election Timelines
- 2027 Election Timelines
- Current Estimated Election Costs
 - Pamphlet: Varies by page count, arguments submitted, & postage. No pamphlet cost if no ballot measures on General Election
 - Additional Election Costs: (~\$9,000): translation, security, legal notices, etc.
 - Note: special election costs are higher because the costs are not shared unless other jurisdictions have ballot measures.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if APS will split the cost of the November General Franchise election.

MR. PETERS said yes.

- Thank you! Questions?

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn

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

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

Mayor

Approval Date of Minutes: April 23, 2026

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 6th day of April 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DATED this _____ day of April 2026.

City Clerk