

Meeting Minutes

City Council Work Session

May 21, 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 4:03p.m.

Roll Call

Council Attendance

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

Appointee Attendance

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

Absent

Councilmember Jennifer Hawkins - excused

Staff in Attendance

Dawn Lang, Deputy City Manager / Chief Financial Officer
Ryan Peters, Deputy City Manager
Leah Powell, Deputy City Manager
Simone Kjolsrud, Water Resources Manager
Jeremy Abbott, Public Works & Utilities Director
Jenny Winkler, Assistant City Attorney
Toni Smith, Marketing & Communications Manager
John Sefton, Community Services Director

Discussion

1. Presentation and Discussion on Chandler Water Resources & Colorado River Update

MAYOR HARTKE called for a staff presentation.

JOHN POMBIER, City Manager, introduced the discussion item

JEREMY ABBOTT, Public Works & Utilities Director, provided information about the presentation.

SIMONE KJOLSRUD, Water Resources Manager, presented the following presentation.

- Chandler Water Resources & Colorado River Update
 - Preparing for less Colorado River water
- Where does our water come from?
 - Surface Water
 - Snow and rain runs off into rivers, lakes and streams. The water is stored in reservoirs behind dams.
 - Groundwater
 - Water stored underground in the space between sand and gravel.
- Chandler's Water Supplies
 - Projected Build-out Supply
 - Drinking Water Supply
 - Reclaimed Water Supply

MAYOR HARTKE asked if there are any foreign entities on the Colorado River that use the Salt or Verde Rivers.

MS. KJOLSRUD answered that the only entities that can use the Salt River are SRP shareholders comprised of the nine valley cities in the Phoenix area. She provided information on the history of water rights and noted that it is important because it determines where Chandler is allowed to use SRP water versus Colorado River water.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if it could be leased/

MS. KJOLSRUD stated it could not be leased and she continued the presentation.

- Chandler Water Resources – Land Status Map
 - SRP member lands use Salt/Verde supplies
 - Off – Project Lands
 - Colorado River
 - Groundwater
 - RWCD water
 - Stored Water
 - Non-Member Lands
 - Same as off-project except no RWCD rights
- Water Supply Challenges
 - Drinking Water

- Colorado River Shortage (CAP)
 - Permanent reductions to Arizona's allocation will likely result in a 20% to 50% cut to Colorado River supplies
- Salt & Verde Supplies (SRP)
 - Winter 2025 driest on record, Winter 2026 also very dry. 2026 and 2027 SRP allocation reduced to ≤ 1.5 AF/acre.
- Groundwater & Stored Water
 - Reduced surface water supplies will result in aquifer draw down
- Reclaimed Water
 - Gila River Indian Community Exchange – 67% of supply
 - Many direct use customers are currently exceeding their contract allocation
 - Aquifer recharge helps to manage seasonal demand

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked when Chandler will receive the report from SRP on what the allocation will be.

MS. KJOLSRUD answered that the board votes on that in the summer and we can expect a decision by August.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked about allocation from the Colorado River.

MS. KJOLSRUD shared that there will be a slide about the Colorado River later in the presentation. She commented that even when SRP makes allocations, they can still change them during the year and make adjustments.

MAYOR HARTKE noted that SRP gets their water from RWCD, he asked about the impacts of reductions.

MS. KJOLSRUD answered that RWCD does not have the same water rights to land like Chandler, they have a contract with SRP. She shared that when SRP reduces the supply available to all cities there is less overall.

MAYOR HARTKE asked about the impacts of moving to a Tier 2 or 3 regarding water conservation.

MS. KJOLSRUD answered shared about the percentage of drinking water supplies versus reclaimed water supply and water conservation.

MAYOR HARTKE followed up and asked what the impact would be if there were a drought declaration.

MS. KJOLSRUD responded that those are decisions that would be made by Council and that there are not specific actions in the draft plan. She emphasized that staff would come to Council for

direction on recommended actions. Ms. Kjolsrud continued the presentation.

- Salt and Verde Reservoirs
 - 2023 – Very wet year, reservoirs 100%
 - 2025 – driest winter on record, reservoirs down from 77% to 55%
 - 2026 – very dry winter, reservoirs remain at 55%
 - SRP reduced CY 2026 water supply due to low reservoir conditions. Need a good summer monsoon, or further reductions remain possible.
 - Winter 2026 (Jan-May 2026)
 - 35% of avg – 13th lowest on record
 - Water Year 2026 (Oct – Sept 2026) projected 29% of normal
 - Water supply for CY 2027 expected to be ≤ 1.5 AF/acre

MAYOR HARTKE asked what a normal allocation is from SRP.

MS. KJOLSRUD shared that prior years have been 3.2 and that is when reservoirs are full and healthy. Ms. Kjolsrud continued the presentation.

- Colorado River Reservoirs
 - The Colorado River accounts for approximately a third of Chandler's average annual drinking water. Lake Powell and Lake Mead are the two largest reservoirs in the system.
- 2026 Colorado River Conditions
 - Water year 2026 is forecasted as the worst year on record.
- Colorado River Emergency Actions
 - April 2026 - reduced releases from 7.48 to 6.0 MAF to maintain elevation 3,500 feet in Lake Powell

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked if they had been released or when they were going to.

MS. KJOLSRUD answered that they immediately modified the schedule of releases from Lake Powell and they have begun releasing water from Flaming Gorge Reservoir to get more water into Powell. She stated it started in April and will continue through 2027. She continued the presentation.

- Lower Basin States Proposal
 - 2027 & 2028 Operations
 - Lower Basin Reductions – 1.25 MAF (AZ -760 kaf, CA -440 kaf, NV -50 kaf) + Mex 250 ? Lake Mead elevation 1,010 ft trigger additional cuts
 - Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) – Extends ICS by expanding the annual/max limits, allows delivery until 1,000 ft. (previously 1,075 ft). New delivery limitations between 1,000 ft to 1,025 ft.
 - Tribal Pool –Lake Mead storage pool to ensure U.S. can meet trust obligation to AZ tribes (GRIC, etc..)
 - Additional Conservation – “700+ Plan” 700,000 AF (AZ – 300 kaf, CA – 300 kaf,

NV – 100 kaf)

- Lower Basin States Proposal
 - 2027 & 2028 Operations
 - Lake Powell Release – Reductions <3,565 ft. 7.0 to 8.0 MAF and protect 3,500 ft (min. power pool elevation 3,490 ft.)
 - Upper Initial Units (UIUs)– Min. 600 kaf release from Upper Basin reservoirs (above Lake Powell) to protect min. power pool
 - Glen Canyon Dam - Implement a plan to address structural risks by end of 2028
 - Lake Powell Bypass Valves – Implement a Pilot Test for extended releases through the river outlet works

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS noted that some of the other states have similar conditions and he asked if there were discussions regarding remapping of the upper basin and lower basin states.

MS. KJOLSRUD provided information about the division of the upper and lower basin. She noted she was not aware of any conversations regarding adjusting the upper and lower basin boundaries.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS emphasized that there is an opportunity for those conversations.

MS. KJOLSRUD answered that part of the map boundaries has to do with the watershed areas and they are measured based on where the water falls and flows on a piece of land. She shared that watershed maps are hard to change since they are quantifying the amount of water that would fall within a certain watershed.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS commented on the importance of having those conversations regarding watershed and encouraged those conversations about the designations.

MAYOR HARTKE confirmed the watershed boundaries related to the upper and lower basins.

MS. KJOLSRUD shared information on the boundaries of the upper and lower basins. She commented about the history of water law related to interstate and international treaties over water.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked about the lower basin states proposal related to the additional conservation numbers.

MS. KJOLSRUD noted that the federal government has not yet accepted the plan and they are waiting to see if they will accept the proposal. She clarified the mandatory cuts and noted that the states are saying they will find additional reductions. Ms. Kjolsrud shared that with the additional voluntary reductions; water users will expect to get compensated through state and federal

funding. She commented that the goal is to not pull water from Lake Mead.

MAYOR HARTKE asked about the lower basin proposal and its impact on Arizona and the Phoenix area. He also asked about where those cuts would go statewide.

MS. KJOLSRUD shared there have not been as many internal conversations in Arizona about what the impact of the reductions would be. She commented that they would likely be by priority and compared Yuma agriculture versus Central Arizona Project.

MAYOR HARTKE asked a follow-up question about the use of groundwater for agriculture.

MS. KJOLSRUD responded that if it is agriculture users in the center of the state it is primarily dependent on groundwater.

MAYOR HARTKE asked if we know the breakdown of how much groundwater is being pumped.

MS. KJOLSRUD shared that the Arizona Department of Water Resources has statistics on how much is being used in different areas of the state as well as agricultural versus municipal. She noted that a lot of the water is used for agriculture in Yuma.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked about testing the bypass tubes and if a lower water level was necessary.

MS. KJOLSRUD commented they have the ability to test them regardless of the water elevation. She noted the priority is the ability to make deliveries with the bypass tubes and that they want clarity if they can make deliveries through the bypass tubes. Ms. Kjolsrud continued the presentation.

- Colorado River Timeline
 - January 2025 – US Bureau of Reclamation published the Post-2026 Alternatives Report, excluding each of the alternatives proposed by the upper basin and lower basin states.
 - April 17, 2026 – Bureau of Reclamation announced Emergency Actions will begin on April 23, 2026
 - May 1, 2026 – Lower Basin States submit a short-term proposal to manage reductions in 2027 and 2028
 - May 8, 2026 – Bureau of Reclamation begins consultation with states and tribes on the preferred alternative in the final EIS. Includes a 10-year period with updates every two years.
 - June/July 2026 – Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision for implementation on January 1, 2027.
- Colorado River Impact to Chandler
 - Normal Year Supply

- (non-shortage year) Chandler's CAP supplies~ 34,000 AF
- 2024 & 2025 Tier 1 Shortage w/ DCP Mitigation
 - Supplies exceed demand
- 2026 Tier 1 Shortage no DCP Mitigation
 - Supplies exceed demand
- 2027 & 2028 Projections
 - Assuming the U.S. accepts the LB States proposal, Chandler's shortage is 17%

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON inquired about the dip in demand in 2025.

MS. KJOLSRUD provided information about the connection between the SRP system and the demand in Chandler. She noted that sometimes we use different sources to meet demand whether it is SRP or Colorado River water.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if the demand was going up due to growth or if it was supplementing demand from SRP.

MS. KJOLSRUD confirmed that both are generally true with the exception of one large customer in the member lands who has significant water projected increase demand over time. Ms. Kjolsrud continued the presentation.

- What makes Chandler unique?
 - Chandler is uniquely positioned to adapt to changes in water resource availability
 - Diverse Supplies – Chandler's back-up alternative water supplies can be used during a Colorado River shortage
 - Water Recycling & Reuse – 100% reuse, reduces demand on drinking water supplies
 - Decades of infrastructure investments
 - 1 - Interconnected water distribution system, with flexibility to deliver multiple water sources to anywhere in Chandler
 - 2 - Surface water treatment plants (SRP and CAP systems)
 - 33 - Drinking water wells provide 100% back-up supply
 - 3 - Water Reclamation Facilities – Every drop is treated and reused!
 - 6 - Recharge facilities to store water in underground aquifers

MAYOR HARTKE asked if we lose a percentage of stored reservoir water over time due to evaporation.

MS. KJOLSRUD confirmed that is correct and continued the presentation.

- What are we already doing?
 - Chandler has been preparing for surface water shortages for decades
 - Water infrastructure investments
 - Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)

- Chandler Drought Team
- RWIF – Reclaimed Water Interconnect Facility
- Parks irrigation efficiency program
- Stormwater management and drywells
- Aquifer Recharge (injection wells & basins)
- Tiered rate structure to encourage conservation
- 100-Year Assured Water Supply Designation
- Conservation education and rebate programs

MAYOR HARTKE commented about the fire risk this summer and asked if ash lowers the water quality.

MS. KJOLSRUD confirmed and continued the presentation.

- Water Conservation Successes
 - Grass removal incentives, leak alerts and water efficiency technology rebates. Conservation programs are changing the way Chandler uses water.
 - Continuous Consumption Alerts– New in 2026! Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) allows us proactively reach out quickly.
 - Reclaimed Water Evaluations– New program in 2025. Communicating with all customers to enforce contract limits.
 - Single Family Grass Removal –Roughly 165,000 sq ft of grass removed since Oct. 2023 and approximately \$300,000 in rebates.
 - Commercial/HOA Grass Removal–Roughly 415,000 sq ft of grass removed since October 2023, and over \$1,000,000 in rebates.
 - Smart Controller Rebate– Residential smart controller rebates have more than doubled. Over 400 installed and over \$30,000 in rebates.
 - Water Efficient Technology Rebate– New program in Oct. 2023, with 22 customers approved and approximately \$200,000 in rebates.
- Water Demand Trends
 - Chandler water consumption:
 - 57% Residential
 - 43% Non-Residential
 - Since 1998, population has nearly doubled, residential gallons per capita per day (GPCD) declined by 20%
 - Improvements in water efficient appliances and xeriscape landscaping can lower residential GPCD
 - Chandler total consumption is roughly the same as 10 years ago (excluding 2020 & 2021)
- 2025 Conservation Initiatives – City Facilities
 - New sub-meters on select city pools and all city facilities with cooling towers
 - Turf to xeriscape program in city retention basins, \$3 Million WIFA grant funding (2,000,000+ sq. ft.)

- City Parks – reduced overseeding, smart controllers for all parks and 13 basins/medians
- Partnered with SRP for funding landscape irrigation efficiency evaluations at all city parks
- Consultant completed water efficiency evaluations for large city facilities and implemented updates
- Where do we go from here?
 - Chandler is committed to conservation and smart water management
 - Develop recommendations for new water conservation ordinances
 - Continue conservation programs
 - Parks irrigation efficiency program
 - Prioritize Aquifer Recharge
 - Evaluate tiered rate structure to encourage conservation – new cost of service study
 - Utility customer Portal
 - Expand Large Landscape Irrigation Efficiency Program
 - Expanded messaging and public awareness campaigns

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS emphasized the importance of water conservation ordinances and that they should address future needs. He expressed wanting to explore water policies that will put the city in a better position.

MAYOR HARTKE asked about current water conservation ordinances.

MS. KJOLSRUD confirmed that some are already in place related to water allocation policy for high volume users and she noted that staff would bring forward additional options to Council. Ms. Kjolsrud continued the presentation.

- 2026 Public Awareness Campaigns
 - Expanded messaging - drought awareness, landscape rebates and outdoor water use tips

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked about freshwater irrigation and use of reclaimed water.

MS. KJOLSRUD shared that there are policies and city code about the drought plan and how a water shortage would be managed related to irrigation and reclaimed water.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO expressed concerns regarding HOAs' water usage.

MS. KJOLSRUD shared about communication staff does to work with the HOAs on water conservation and continued the presentation.

- Next Steps
 - Develop Ordinance Recommendations– Complete an evaluation of potential new

water conservation ordinances and develop recommendations.

- Public Awareness Messaging– A new campaign will begin Fall 2026 to share information about how Chandler is preparing.
 - Reclaimed Water Agreements – Continued customer engagement, offer water budgeting software and irrigation strategies, assist customers exceeding their allotment.
 - Regional Partnerships– Participate in the feasibility study to modify Bartlett Dam and evaluate projects proposed to the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority Long-Term Augmentation.
- Thank you! Questions?

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked if it takes more water for a winter lawn than it does for a summer lawn.

MS. KJOLSRUD answered that overseeding is what takes the most water such as the winter rye grass.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked about storing the water credits in northern Arizona.

MS. KJOLSRUD shared about the reclamation water interconnect facility and that as part of that Chandler sold the majority of their capacity to the NAUSP. The reclamation water interconnect facility redirected the water to Chandler for local aquifer recharge.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO have we seen an increase in our aquifer.

MS. KJOLSRUD responded that in Chandler water levels have been rising due to how much recharge is done, so they are rising or staying the same, but it is expected to change soon.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO confirmed the water we are storing today will be able to address future demand.

MS. KJOLSRUD agreed. She shared it will allow Chandler to use that backup supply in a future year when we don't have sufficient surface water supply.

MAYOR HARTKE asked what is the next cheapest water available to Chandler.

MS. KJOLSRUD commented that it depends on what the city is looking for such as a long-term permanent or occasional as needed just during a severe shortage year. The next cheapest would likely be an importation project from out of state such as desalination or regional partnerships and exchanges. She shared about projects that are being evaluated outside of Arizona.

MAYOR HARTKE asked about the cost of desalination.

MS. KJOLSRUD shared it depends on the perspective related to capital investment cost as well as ongoing operations and maintenance costs. She continued that it also depends on the type of supply Chandler needs such as long term ongoing versus emergency backup supply.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked about Central Arizona Project reducing water supply related to the price of water.

MS. KJOLSRUD confirmed that delivery costs have been increasing and are expected to go up. She shared about a briefing she attended and confirmed the rates will be going up.

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

ATTEST: 
City Clerk


Mayor

Approval Date of Minutes: June 11, 2026

Certification

Work Session of the City Council of Chandler, Arizona, held on the 21st day of May 2026. I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DATED this 11th day of June, 2026.


City Clerk

