

Meeting Minutes

City Charter Amendment

Resident Advisory Committee

Regular Meeting

July 31, 2025 | 3:00 p.m.
Council Chambers Conference Room
88 E. Chicago St., Chandler, AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lopez at 3:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Commission Attendance

Chair René Lopez
Committee Member Heather Anguiano
Committee Member Sherida McMullan
Committee Member Lisa Askey
Committee Member Jim Jurnak

Staff Attendance

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

Absent

Committee Member Jennifer Pawlik – excused
Committee Member Ursula Gordwin – excused
Committee Member Brad Davis – excused

Introductions

RENÉ LOPEZ, Chair, opened the meeting and asked members and staff to introduce themselves.

KEVIN HARTKE, Mayor, provided comments about the importance of the City Charter and the committee's opportunity to review the Charter to ensure it is up to date.

Discussion

1. Open Meeting Law / Conflict of Interest Training & Public Speaking Protocol

CHAIR LOPEZ called for a presentation.

RYAN PETERS, Strategic Initiatives Director, introduced the item. He shared that the Chandler City Charter allows for amendments initiated by a charter committee that may be created by ordinance. Earlier in the year, the City Council chose to form a charter committee with a sunset date of November 3, 2026. He advised that city staff are not able to be in favor or against any potential city ballot language. The committee is a public body as outlined in Arizona Revised Statutes, and therefore any meeting is subject to Open Meeting Law.

JEN WINKLER, Assistant City Attorney, presented the following presentation.

- City Charter Amendment Resident Advisory Committee Training
- Open Meeting Law
- Public Bodies
- What is a Meeting?
- How Do We Have a Legal Meeting?
- Public Comment
- When Can a Public Body Meet in Private?
- Executive Sessions
- Can we discuss matters not on the agenda?

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK commented that anything having to do with the charter is on the agenda at any given time and asked how specific agenda items would be.

MS. WINKLER explained that the committee will need to be specific with agenda items. She will be present at the meetings to help guide the committee in adhering to Open Meeting Law.

MS. WINKLER continued the presentation.

- Minutes
- Open Meeting Pitfalls

COMMITTEE MEMBER MCMULLAN asked if Open Meeting Law would apply to group texts.

MS. WINKLER said that it is appropriate to consider and added that Open Meeting Law also applies to the use of social media.

MS. WINKLER continued the presentation.

- Serial Meetings or Splintering the Quorum
- Emails
- Social Media and Social Events

CHAIR LOPEZ asked if members will be at a city event, then will that event be posted.

MS. WINKLER said that staff may post a quorum notice for the event, clarifying that no official business will be conducted, even though members may be in attendance.

JENNIFER EKBLAD, Deputy City Clerk, added that the Clerk's Office posts quorum notices.

MS. WINKLER continued the presentation.

- What Happens if We Violate the Open Meeting Law?
- Conflict of Interest
- How Do You Know if You Have a Conflict of Interest?
- How Do You Know if You Have a Conflict of Interest?
- What To Do if You Have a Conflict of Interest?
- Conflict of Interest Law Violations

MS. EKBLAD continued the presentation.

- Public Records
- What is a Record / What is not a Record?
- Who Has to Comply with Public Records Laws?
- Boards and Commissions Records
- Email is a Public Record
- Questions?

2. City of Chandler Charter Overview

CHAIR LOPEZ called for a presentation.

MR. PETERS presented the following presentation.

- City Charter Amendment Resident Advisory Committee, July 31, 2025
- Committee Charge
- Charter Overview
- Charter Overview
- Charter Overview
- Arizona Charter Cities

CHAIR LOPEZ commented that Gilbert is the largest non-chartered non-city.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKEY asked what the benefit is to being a charter city.

MR. PETERS explained that when Chandler originally adopted their charter in 1965, there was more power invested in charter cities. Over time, the power granted to charter cities has eroded due to actions at the statewide level noted as "matters of statewide concern." A charter gives residents confidence that the city will perform at expectations set in the charter, such as term

limits. To expand or limit term limits, the voters would be consulted in a charter amendment election.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKEY clarified that in this November 2025 election, Chandler voters would be consulted in a charter amendment election to expand or limit term limits.

MS. WINKLER said that was correct. She added that the process to adopt a charter requires a lot of input and involvement by citizens.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Charter Overview
- Charter Overview
- Potential Charter Amendments

CHAIR LOPEZ asked about the potential charter amendment related to nomination papers. He asked to confirm what the language "nomination papers" referred to.

MR. PETERS said it referred to when nomination papers are submitted by a candidate filing to seek office.

CHAIR LOPEZ said it will be important to distinguish nomination papers from nomination petitions.

MS. EKBLAD clarified that there is a nomination form required to be submitted by candidates when filing.

CHAIR LOPEZ asked to ensure that the language is clear and specific when this amendment is up for discussion with the committee.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Potential Charter Amendments

COMMITTEE MEMBER MCMULLAN asked about the potential charter amendment regarding filling of vacancies, if there is a certain timeframe the committee should suggest.

MR. PETERS said setting a timeframe is at the will of the committee.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MCMULLAN asked if staff would provide further background information regarding this scenario.

MR. PETERS said yes and added that it is not common to have a limitation like this in a city charter.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK said it would be prudent to have a timeframe outlined in the charter.

CHAIR LOPEZ explained the historical context in which this charter section last came up, noting that the Council had to act quickly to fill a councilmember vacancy within the 30-day timeframe. He added that a longer window would be beneficial in such situations.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MCMULLAN added that a longer time frame would assist in gathering qualified candidates for the position.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Potential Charter Amendments

CHAIR LOPEZ asked about the potential charter amendment related to fire limits, and asked what fire limits are.

MR. PETERS said it is the geographic limits where the city fire service ends. Fire limits are currently established over the geographic region in Chandler. Staff does not anticipate changes to fire limits in the future but it would grant the authority to change them to the City Manager.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Potential Charter Amendments

CHAIR LOPEZ commented that the practice of requiring multiple readings for a city ordinance is a holdover from the state legislature. The state legislature requires multiple readings for bills, however; many charter cities do not require this practice.

MR. PETERS said that is correct, many of these potential charter amendment items are due to Chandler's charter being out of alignment with other comparable charter cities in Arizona.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Potential Charter Amendments

COMMITTEE MEMBER MCMULLAN asked about the potential charter amendment regarding residency requirements.

MR. PETERS explained that the requirement is to have a Chandler address, which has been a challenge when it comes to department head or appointed position recruitment.

CHAIR LOPEZ added that this is likely an item left from the original charter adoption in 1965, explaining that it made sense at the time.

MR. PETERS agreed and added that this would help with succession planning in departments, Chandler employees are not pursuing director positions due to not meeting the residency requirement for the role.

CHAIR LOPEZ said previously as a member of Council, they voted to allow a temporary exemption of this rule. He asked if this could be a statement added in the charter to allow for exemptions as granted by City Council.

MR. PETERS said it is up to the committee.

CHAIR LOPEZ asked if that past action could have been in violation of the charter as written.

MS. WINKLER shared that it would be better to have language in the charter that says what actions Council can take. It is better to have it set out clearly, so it is without question.

MR. PETERS said this is similar to the question in the November 2025 election and explained that Proposition 411 considers clarifying the actions Council can take regarding setting the City Manager's term and severance pay and aligning Chandler with standard practices of other municipalities.

MS. WINKLER said the charter has language in it that says the charter is intended to invest authority in Council under state law, it is meant to be used as a guiding document.

MR. PETERS noted that Chandler is the only municipality with the residency requirement for department directors and appointed positions.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MCMULLAN asked what the proposed amendment would be for this subject.

MR. PETERS said it would be up to the committee; options were to require Chandler residency for City Manager only, or for all appointed positions only.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK said staff has brought up these items, more detailed discussion is needed.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MCMULLAN suggested adding language to specify the timeframe for meeting the requirement. She noted that many corporations typically allow up to one year for compliance.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK said more specific language from Council could cover that issue.

MR. PETERS explained that one challenge with this subject with the council-manager form of government that Chandler is governed by, is that City Council does not have hiring authority for department heads, the City Manager does. It is up to the committee's judgment to determine which positions the requirement should apply to.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK said the committee would revisit this item in more detail later.

MR. PETERS agreed.

MR. PETERS continued the presentation.

- Election Timelines
- August 4, 2026 Primary/Special Election
- November 3, 2026 General/Special Election

CHAIR LOPEZ asked if the other elections considered for 2026 had determined if they would go on the primary or general election.

MR. PETERS said there is nothing yet decided. 2026 will consist of a franchise election, General Plan election, Home Rule, and municipal mayoral and councilmember candidate elections. There are other statewide issues that may be in the general election. Part of the work this committee will do is strategize what election the charter amendment questions will go on and how many ballot charter amendment questions there will be.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKEY clarified that the committee would provide ideas and staff will work on specific language of any ballot questions.

MR. PETERS said yes and explained that general staff will propose ideas and give recommendations. The committee can provide feedback. The committee will proceed section by section and allow for ideas generated by the committee.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKEY observed that depending on the results of the November 2025 charter amendment election, the charter language may change. She asked if there was anything to be aware of in this consideration.

MR. PETERS said the two charter amendment questions, if approved, would not impact what is proposed to the committee.

CHAIR LOPEZ asked when the November 2025 charter amendments would be approved.

MR. PETERS said after the election results are certified, the governor is required to sign off on the charter amendments. The governor chooses when to sign off on them.

CHAIR LOPEZ said this may be something to consider if the November 2025 charter amendments are not passed by voters, the committee may be able to bring them back for consideration.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MCMULLAN asked about the meeting frequency of the committee to meet the election calendar requirements.

MR. PETERS said the committee would determine its meeting frequency. Generally, the work of the committee is expected to produce results early fall 2025 to report to City Council and hear feedback. At that point, it is up to the Council to approve questions for a future election.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK asked if the committee would be required to list every specific charter change as an item to be voted on.

MS. WINKLER said no.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK commented that there is lot of opportunity for general language cleanup, such as changing "councilman" to "councilmember."

MS. WINKLER said part of that would be strategy for the committee to discuss.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MCMULLAN suggested using AI solutions for language clean up.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKEY agreed.

CHAIR LOPEZ said it would be helpful to categorize proposed charter amendments in a matrix, such as general cleanup, staff-initiated items, and Council interest.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK agreed about having different categories of cleaning up. The charter document should be clear and understandable to residents. He suggested general clean-up and areas with complete updates. He mentioned that Section 10-11 in the charter applies gender neutrality to the entire document, without going through the entire document to remove and change the language.

MR. PETERS said that the charter amendment was likely restricted by publication costs at the time. Currently the charter is published electronically.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK agreed. He suggested three categories of consideration: general clean-up, areas with updates, and any new content not currently in the charter.

CHAIR LOPEZ said the committee can discuss any new content that staff or committee members suggest. Anything proposed is going to Council for approval.

COMMITTEE MEMBER JURNAK agreed. Charter amendment ballot questions should be presented in a clear way that avoids voter fatigue.

MR. PETERS restated that staff cannot make recommendations about major policy changes. It is the prerogative of the committee to forward their charter amendments to City Council for approval. Items discussed today are more related to clean-up and operational needs staff has identified, rather than organizational changes. The committee will collaborate working through these items in a constructive way to meet deadlines and provide recommendations to Council.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKEY asked how public comments submitted on the website will be shared with the committee.

MR. PETERS said staff will produce them for the committee.

- Thank you!

Calendar

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

The committee consensus was that the next regular meeting will be held on August 13, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers Conference room, pending location availability.

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.


Ryan Peters, Staff Liaison
René Lopez, Chair