

March 18, 2024

Town of Chandler Council Meeting Minutes

The Chandler Town Council meeting was called to order March 18, 2024, at the Chandler Town Hall, 401 E. Lincoln Ave. at 6:00 p.m.

Roll call: Present - Cheryl Amos, Tom Burnett, Sandy Elder, Ron Whitledge

Absent – Tonya Wester

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes: Minutes for March 4, 2024, regular meeting were presented to the council. Motion was made by Cheryl Amos to approve the minutes, second by Sandy Elder. **Roll call:** Cheryl Amos yes, Tom Burnett yes, Sandy Elder yes, Ron Whitledge yes. Motion carried.

Public Information Meeting: Ron closed the regular meeting and opened the public hearing for annexations. Josh summarized information regarding the annexation. The affected population in the Northwest regions is 49, 10 in the Western, 39 in the Southwester 39, and 15 in the Eastern region. Josh explained that growth is occurring, and several people have approached the town for voluntary annexations that prompted additional annexation proposals. Some development has occurred and will occur, and the town wants a say in what that development looks like due to its effect on our community. The advantages are that sewer rates will be lower, guaranteed police service, guaranteed fire services, improved road maintenance, and greater influence in local politics. The two biggest disadvantages are zoning and taxes. The zoning regulations are very similar to the county's and in some cases, we are more lenient. The town also could exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction which would allow us to enforce zoning within 2 miles of our border, so annexations will give those people representation. The 2 most notable exceptions to zoning is allowing use of firearms on properties that are at least 5 acres and restrictions on mining and oil/mineral extraction. State law also prohibits agriculture property from paying higher taxes after annexations, but residential and commercial property will see some increases. The estimated increase is \$200 to \$300 per year, but it can vary depending on property size and use. Utility connection requirements don't change. Josh explained that this is the final information hearing, and we'll have to have 2 readings on an ordinance to finalize the annexation. A notice will also have to be published in the newspaper and mailed to each resident in the annexed area. The notice will be mailed to the owner on file with the county. Josh offered to stay after the meeting to answer questions, but for this meeting speakers will be limited to 3 minutes. Josh also offered the councils email address and explained that he spoke with the council president, and she was very sick and regrets being unable to attend and added that she rarely misses meetings.

Kim James from the Western region, Suzanne and Jerry Garret from the Southwestern region, Chris Lasley from the Northwestern region, Curtis Ingram from the Northwestern region, Brittany Houck from

the Southwestern region, Brandon Scholl from the Eastern region, Brad Mathis from the Southwestern region, Darrell Metzger from the Eastern region, Martin Heim from the Eastern Region, Jason Chandley from the Southwestern region, Steve Dickerson from the Southwestern region and owning property in the Western region, and Allen Mosby from the Southwestern region attended the meeting and signed up to speak. The attached Annexation FAQ addresses most questions and concerns raised during public information meetings. Josh invited everyone to email him or the council with additional questions or concerns.

Ron closed the public hearing and reopened the regular meeting.

Citizens on the Agenda: Patrick Hickey attended to discuss the income survey. Patrick briefly explained that the town could be eligible for OCRA, but we would have to perform a new income survey to qualify. We could use an OCRA grant to cover 90% of the cost for a master plan as well as other grants. We are currently at 48% low-to-moderate income, but we have to have 51% to qualify for the grant. We can update the state's data by performing an income survey at a cost of \$1,500. The survey would be valid for 5 years and will take 2 to 2 and a half months to complete. Misty asked about our last income survey and Larry added that we performed one for the Green Valley stormwater project. The next step is to submit a letter to the state giving 3 reasons why we believe the low-to-moderate income data needs to be updated. Misty asked if it's required for most grants and Patrick said it's required for HUD grants. Sandy asked for clarification and Larry explained that we have to do the income survey first to qualify for grants and then submit a separate grant application. Patrick explained that it'll all be done by mail. Motion was made by Cheryl Amos to authorize Tonya to sign letter to state, second by Sandy Elder. **Roll call:** Cheryl Amos yes, Tom Burnett yes, Sandy Elder yes, Ron Whitledge yes. Motion carried.

Town Attorney: Josh presented Ordinance 2024-07 authorizing water projects and the BAN/Bonds required to fund them. Josh explained that the bond will pay for the BAN after it's closed. Josh invited Scott and Bill from Baker Tilly to discuss the financing. Tyler added that the funding is necessary for the Water Tower, Libbert Rd, S State St, and Telephone Rd projects and we can't proceed without the BAN. Motion was made by Cheryl Amos to approve Ordinance 2024-07, second by Sandy Elder. **Roll call:** Cheryl Amos yes, Tom Burnett yes, Sandy Elder yes, Ron Whitledge yes. Motion carried.

Josh said we're waiting for appraisals to finalize the firestation. He thanked Scott and Bill for being available.

Police Chief: Report emailed.

Fire Chief: Report emailed.

Director of Public Services: Report emailed. Tyler presented the tentative award notice to Aigner Construction for the Telephone Rd project in the amount of \$988,850. Motion was made by Tom Burnette to approve the tentative award, second by Cheryl Amos. **Roll call:** Cheryl Amos yes, Tom Burnett yes, Sandy Elder yes, Ron Whitledge yes. Motion carried.

Utility Administrator: Report emailed. Misty asked for questions about the proposed pickleball court. Ron said he would like to do it, but he's not certain of the location. Cheryl disagreed and feels it would be a great location. Tom agreed with Cheryl that it would be more cost efficient there. Sandy suggested we could transfer the equipment somewhere else in the future.

Sandy asked Tyler about hiring. Tyler explained that we offer positions to internal employees before advertising publicly. An employee left and after an employee transferred to collections, we have an opening in maintenance.

Ron asked to see the estimates for the court. Cheryl explained that the estimates are based on color choices and Cheryl liked the blue and green to match the town flag. Misty added that the fence between the court and playground adds \$1,500 in expenses. Misty mentioned transferring money to park from general and added that we still have Jaycee money. Cheryl suggested tabling it until they can ask Brian about financing.

Misty asked about signs and said they might be installing disc golf baskets this week. The council thought they looked good.

Environmental Manager: Report emailed. Michael wanted to clarify the comment between him and Mr. Schole. There was no ill intended and he simply meant that the line between the country and town is changing.

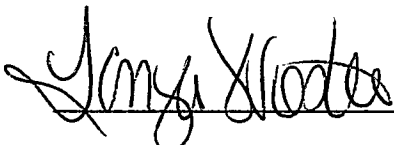
Clerk Treasurer: Report emailed.

Parks & Rec: Ron announced that we had a community wide Easter egg hunt the previous Saturday and it went great. He thanked Misty for doing most of the work and added that several employees helped too including the police department. He also thanked the Lion's Club and Misty said they did a lot of the yard work.

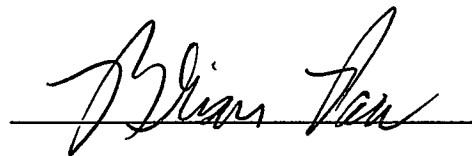
New Business: Ron mentioned that he discussed the solar eclipse that will occur on April 8 with Tonya. The schools will close and the county will too. Ron suggested closing the town offices at noon to allow everyone to celebrate and watch the eclipse. Motion was made by Ron Whitledge to give employees a half day paid holiday for the eclipse on April 8 except emergency response employees, second by Cheryl Amos. **Roll call:** Cheryl Amos yes, Tom Burnett yes, Sandy Elder yes, Ron Whitledge yes. Motion carried.

Claims: Cheryl Amos made a motion to approve claims as presented in the amount of \$683,814.16, second by Sandy Elder. **Roll call:** Cheryl Amos yes, Tom Burnett yes, Sandy Elder yes, Ron Whitledge yes. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Cheryl Amos to recess the meeting, second by Sandy Elder. **Roll call:** Cheryl Amos yes, Tom Burnett yes, Sandy Elder yes, Ron Whitledge yes. Motion carried.



Tonya Wester, Council President



Brian Pace, Clerk Treasurer

TOWN OF CHANDLER

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ANNEXATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is the Town of Chandler annexing areas?

The Town of Chandler is undertaking annexation to effectively manage its recent growth and prepare for future expansion. By incorporating these areas into the town limits, Chandler aims to proactively plan and allocate resources for crucial infrastructure developments, including roads, water, and sewer improvements. This approach also facilitates strategic planning for police and fire services to address current and anticipated needs. Notably, all homes in the targeted areas are already connected to Chandler's sewer and water services, making this annexation a logical step to include many existing utility customers within the town's corporate boundaries.

What areas are proposed for annexation?

The plan includes four distinct regions totaling about 1,027 acres:

1. Northwest Region: This area covers roughly 223 acres, generally north of Heim Road, west of Inderrieden Road, and east of Tow Path Road.
2. Western Region: Encompassing approximately 374 acres, it is bounded by Heim Road to the north, Highway 62 to the south, and the Mallard Circle subdivision to the east.
3. Southwest Region: Around 258 acres, this region is demarcated by Gardner Road, Castle Garden Road, and Castle Orchard Lane.
4. Eastern Region: This includes about 134 acres, located east of the community center and along Old Plank Road.

While the law treats each area individually, they will follow the same timeline.

How will annexation impact the Town's tax rate?

The collective annexation of these four areas is projected to lower the Town's overall tax rate by approximately \$0.0072, compared to the 2024 certified property tax rate, thanks to a significant increase in assessed value.

How will annexation benefit me?

Annexation offers multiple advantages to residents and businesses in the proposed areas:

1. Lower sewer bills: Annexed property owners will experience a reduction in their monthly sewer bill. For an average resident using 5,000 gallons a month, the bill will drop by \$7.50 monthly (or \$90 annually). Water rates will remain unaffected by annexation.
2. Enhanced police services: The Chandler Police Department will serve annexed properties, potentially offering faster response times compared to the Sheriff's department.
3. Guaranteed fire services: The Chandler Fire Department will be legally obligated to serve annexed areas. This is a change from the current arrangement, where services are provided through contracts with Ohio Township.
4. Improved road maintenance: Annexed properties will benefit from Chandler's street and road maintenance, which some consider more attentive and comprehensive than alternatives.
5. Greater influence: Currently, annexed property owners use Chandler sewer and water services without significant influence over rates and operations, or a say in the town council overseeing these utilities. Annexation will enable these property owners to vote and have a more direct say in utility services, as well as in police and fire services.

What services will the Town offer?

Within one year of the annexation becoming effective, the Town will offer essential services including police and fire protection, street and road maintenance, storm water management, and landscape waste collection, along with other routine non-capital services. Capital improvements, like street construction and enhanced storm water systems, will reach the annexed areas within three years of the effective date. All services will be delivered consistently with those provided within the Town's corporate limits.

Can the Town of Chandler regulate how we use our property?

Once annexed, these areas will fall under the Chandler Municipal Code. However, Town officials intend not to alter the existing zoning classification for the annexed areas.

Is annexation aimed at increasing the Town's revenue?

No, the town's main goals for annexation are to effectively manage future growth, ensure infrastructure keeps pace with expansion, and boost economic development to diversify and stabilize the tax base. The attractiveness of the Chandler region as a residential area is likely to persist. To preempt suburban sprawl and ensure our roads and utilities support future development, proactive planning is crucial. Any additional property tax revenue from

annexation will be reinvested. These funds will cover the costs of extra staff and equipment needed to extend town services to the annexed areas and will also support the planning, engineering, and construction of essential improvements.

Will my taxes increase?

The town has analyzed the fiscal impact of annexing four areas. Typically, annexation will increase property taxes for most owners due to the town's tax rate. About 78% of properties might see tax hikes, generally between \$200 and \$300 annually, varying by property type and value. Tax caps often temper these increases. Higher taxes for many will be balanced by lower sewer rates for town residents. Moreover, Indiana Code § 36-4-3-4.1 exempts annexed agricultural land from municipal taxes. These properties will keep their exemption from all municipal taxes as long as they are classified as agricultural.

What is the impact of adding the Northwest Region to the Town of Chandler?

The Northwest Region, covering about 223 acres, has an estimated population of 49. As a result of the annexation, the assessed value for this area in the Town will increase by \$2,702,320 to \$154,539,625. This represents an increase of approximately 1.7797%. It will result in an estimated increase in property tax rates of \$0.0005.

What is the impact of adding the Western Region to the Town of Chandler?

The Western Region, covering about 374 acres, has an estimated population of 10. As a result of the annexation, the assessed value for this area in the Town will increase by \$999,260 to \$152,836,565. This represents an increase of approximately 0.6581%. It will result in an estimated increase in property tax rates of \$0.0021.

What is the impact of adding the Southwest Region to the Town of Chandler?

The Southwest Region, covering about 258 acres, has an estimated population of 39. As a result of the annexation, the assessed value for this area in the Town will increase by \$4,686,440 to \$156,523,745. This represents an increase of approximately 3.0865%.

What is the impact of adding the Eastern Region to the Town of Chandler?

The Eastern Region, covering about 134 acres, has an estimated population of 15. As a result of the annexation, the assessed value for this area in the Town will increase by \$659,060 to \$152,496,365. This represents an increase of approximately 0.4341%. It will result in an estimated increase in property tax rates of \$0.0025.

How will annexation affect storm water fees?

Presently, the Town of Chandler charges a storm water fee of \$6.50 per month for residential properties. By contrast, Warrick County charges \$5.00 per month for residential properties.

Will I need to connect to the Town's sewer and water services?

Most of the proposed annexation areas are already connected to and serviced by the Town's sewer and water system.

Does the Town offer trash collection services?

No, the Town does not provide this service. Trash collection is managed privately.

Does annexation affect the schools my children can attend?

No, it does not. The school system operates independently with its own set of rules for determining school districts and eligibility. Therefore, annexation will not influence school district boundaries or school attendance options.

Who governs the Town?

The town is governed by a five-member Town Council, elected by the residents. This council serves both as the executive and legislative body of the municipality. Members hold staggered four-year terms. The current Town Council includes Cheryl Amos, Tom Burnett, Sandy Elder, Ron Whitedge, and Tonya Wester.

Can I serve on a board or commission?

Yes, as a resident, you become eligible to serve on town boards and commissions. You can also run for elected office and vote for municipal officers, such as the Clerk-Treasurer and Town Council, in regular and special elections.

When does the annexation take effect?

The Chandler annexation is anticipated to take effect on January 1, 2024. The Town will start providing services to these areas within one year of this date.

What are the next steps for annexation?

The Town Council has informed property owners and is initiating an outreach program, which includes six public information meetings at Town Hall, 401 E. Lincoln Avenue, Chandler, Indiana, on the following dates and times:

- Monday, March 4 at 6:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, March 6 at 12 noon
- Friday, Marc 8 at 5:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 12 at 5:30 p.m.
- Thursday, March 14 at 12 noon

- Monday, March 18 at 6:00 p.m.

At these meetings, attendees can examine a map of the proposed boundaries, plans for capital and non-capital services, and the anticipated fiscal impacts. The Clerk-Treasurer will review written objections or suggestions received before the meetings. Everyone interested will have a chance to share their views at the scheduled times and places.

Following these meetings, the Town Council will take several steps: introduce an annexation ordinance, adopt a fiscal plan for the annexation, consider modifications to the ordinance based on public feedback, and ultimately vote on the final adoption of the annexation ordinances.