

March 3, 2025

### Town of Chandler Council Meeting Minutes

The Chandler Town Council meeting was called to order March 3, 2025, at the Chandler Town Hall, 401 E. Lincoln Ave. at 6:00 p.m.

**Roll call: Present** – Cheryl Amos, Tom Burnett, Sarah Eller, Tonya Wester, Ron Whitledge

**Absent** – none

### Pledge of Allegiance

**Mine Subsidence Event:** Council President Wester acknowledged the presence of residents and expressed appreciation for their attendance. She noted the unprecedented nature of the mine subsidence incident that occurred on March 1, 2025, at approximately 6:30 a.m. in the Monroe First and Second Street area. Wester emphasized that the safety of residents remains the Town Council's highest priority and assured the public that all available resources were being mobilized to assess and address the situation. She further explained that town officials had been in continuous communication with state agencies, emergency responders, and infrastructure specialists to coordinate efforts and provide timely updates to those affected.

Michael Bell, Environmental Manager, addressed the public, explaining that he has been on-site since the initial incident and has worked tirelessly to assess the situation. He confirmed that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) had officially determined that the event was caused by mine subsidence. Emergency response teams and engineers have been evaluating the area to ensure safety and identify necessary steps moving forward.

Tyler Kinder, representing the Utility Department, provided updates on the impact to local infrastructure. He reported that three water line breaks had occurred due to ground movement, all of which had been repaired. Gas services to First and Second Streets were turned off as a precautionary measure, and sewer mains were inspected, with most appearing stable. However, some lateral separations were found in affected homes. Residents planning to vacate their homes were advised to notify the maintenance department to have their utilities shut off properly.

Matthew Goebel, Director of Warrick County Emergency Management, spoke on the ongoing damage assessments conducted by his team. He confirmed that his office had been in direct contact with Homeland Security, which was scheduled to arrive for further evaluations. Goebel encouraged displaced residents to reach out to his office for assistance with any unmet needs and provided contact information for follow-ups.

Grant Freeman, Project Manager with MCF Construction, provided insight into the structural impact of mine subsidence. He explained that signs of damage may include stair-step cracks in brick homes,

separation around windows and doors, and uneven flooring. He emphasized that mine subsidence insurance is the primary funding source for necessary repairs. Homeowners without such insurance would be responsible for their own costs. Freeman also addressed technical questions regarding historical mining activity and the geological factors contributing to the collapse.

A public question-and-answer session followed, during which residents raised specific concerns:

Wayne Blake, co-owner of 211 Monroe, inquired about responsibility for determining the precipitating event that led to the mine collapse and which party would ultimately be held responsible. Grant explained that many of the old underground mines used the pillar-and-post method, leaving large coal pillars to support the roof. In some cases, miners removed these pillars when closing the mine, which could contribute to collapses decades later. He further clarified that settlements from historical mining operations were placed into a state fund that mine subsidence insurance policies now draw from.

Nicholas Schapker asked who would be responsible for the cost of repairing lateral separations from the main sewer system. Tyler stated that the town would work with affected homeowners to assist in coordinating repairs. Grant added that some insurance policies include coverage for additional living expenses, which could be beneficial for homeowners unable to reside in their homes during repairs.

A resident from 115 Monroe Street asked if and when gas services would be restored to affected homes. Tyler confirmed that gas services were shut off to portions of First and Second Streets as a precaution, and restoration would depend on structural stabilization and clearance from engineers and Vectren (CenterPoint Energy).

Terra Norman asked how residents would receive updates regarding the situation. Tonya responded that updates would be posted on the town's official website and Facebook page, as well as communicated via emails, text messages, and phone calls for directly affected residents.

Residents also raised concerns about security in vacated homes. The Chandler Police Department confirmed they would increase patrols in affected areas to monitor for potential security threats.

Brian Lucas urged his fellow citizens to get mine subsidence insurance if they did not already have it with an emotionally stirring comment about his own situation. He asked if the power would be left on to the affected homes. Cheryl assured him that as long as it is safe, the town wouldn't ask CenterPoint to turn it off. Matthew Goebel with Warrick EMA urged Brian to reach out to his office for assistance if needed. Brian thanked Cheryl and the town employees.

The Town Council reiterated its commitment to keeping residents informed and stated that additional public meetings may be scheduled, if necessary, particularly to facilitate discussions with the DNR.

Tonya Wester had to leave shortly after the question-and-answer portion of the meeting and Ron Whitledge acted as president for the remainder of the meeting in her place.

**Minutes:** Minutes for the February 18th regular meeting were presented to the council. Motion was made by Sarah Eller to approve the minutes with one spelling correction, seconded by Cheryl Amos. **Roll call:** Cheryl Amos, yes, Tom Burnett yes, Sarah Eller yes, Tonya Wester absent, Ron Whitledge yes. Motion carried.

**Town Attorney:** Josh informed the Council that he had been reviewing contract agreements for upcoming infrastructure projects, ensuring compliance with state regulations. Additionally, he noted that discussions with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) regarding stormwater pollution protection plans were ongoing, and an update would be provided at a future meeting. Josh and Tyler had emailed the council a proposed ordinance regarding these IDEM suggestions for pre-treatment and fees to be updated. Josh asked if the council would do a first reading on Ordinance 2025-02. Motion was made by Cheryl Amos, seconded by Sarah Eller. **Roll call:** Cheryl Amos, yes, Tom Burnett yes, Sarah Eller yes, Tonya Wester absent, Ron Whitledge yes. Motion carried.

Josh also reiterated that a formal ordinance draft for police officer training reimbursement would be prepared after consultation with Chief Kirk Tevault. The Council discussed reimbursement policies for police officer training. Josh introduced the topic, explaining that it has become increasingly common for municipalities to implement reimbursement policies due to the competitive nature of law enforcement hiring. He noted that many towns and counties invest significant resources into training new officers, only to have them leave for other agencies shortly after completing training. This type of policy would help recoup those costs if an officer leaves within a specified time frame.

**Police Chief:** Report emailed. Kirk provided updates regarding police department operations. He reported that the department had been actively monitoring vacant homes in the affected mine subsidence area, increasing patrols to deter unauthorized entry or vandalism. He also noted that recent officer training initiatives had been successfully completed.

**Fire Chief:** A report from the Fire Chief was emailed to the Council and made available for review.

**Director of Public Services:** Tyler provided updates on ongoing public works projects. He reported that crews had completed routine maintenance on several streets and drainage systems in preparation for the upcoming spring season. He also noted that a contract had been finalized for the relocation of water lines on Stevenson Station Road, a necessary step due to ongoing bridge reconstruction efforts. Tyler assured the Council that his department continues to address infrastructure concerns proactively.

**Utility Administrator:** Misty Denk provided an update on utility billing and operations. She informed the Council that her team had been processing an increased volume of customer inquiries due to the mine subsidence event and ensured that affected residents were receiving accurate and timely information regarding their utility services. Misty stated that her team in the billing office had stuffed over 4,000 eggs and counting for the upcoming Easter Egg hunt. She reminded everyone that Food Truck Thursdays were restarting this week.

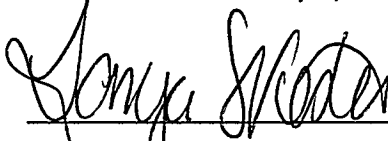
**Environmental Manager:** Michael took a moment to commend the town employees for their work. He stated that the owners of the old racetrack property would be here next week to attend APC meetings and discuss their request for annexation.


**Clerk-Treasurer:** Report emailed.

**Claims:** Sarah Eller made a motion to approve claims as presented in the amount of \$815,367.05, seconded by Cheryl Amos. **Roll call:** Cheryl Amos yes, Tom Burnett yes, Sarah Eller yes, Tonya Wester, absent, Ron Whitledge yes. Motion carried.

**Motion to Adjourn:** Motion was made by Cheryl Amos to recess the meeting, seconded by Tom Burnett.

**Roll call:** Tom Burnett yes, Sarah Eller yes, Tonya Wester absent, Ron Whittedge yes. Motion carried.

  
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Tonya Wester, Council President

  
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Kayla Litton, Clerk Treasurer