



14600 Minnetonka Blvd. | Minnetonka, MN 55345 | 952-939-8200 | eminnetonka.com

TO: Charter Commission
FROM: Corrine Heine, City Attorney
DATE: May 26, 2020
SUBJECT: Addendum for May 26, 2020

The following items are added as an addendum to the agenda packet:

- Questions prepared by Commission Member Terry Schneider
- Chair Northrup invited council members to identify topics or questions that council members would like the commission to address. As of the preparation of this addendum, only one response has been received, from Council Member Schaeppi.
- Emails received from members of the public since the packet was posted

For consideration at the 5/26/20 Charter Commission meeting from Terry Schneider:

Questions for the Charter Commission to consider regarding the initiative to change the voting process for Minnetonka to Ranked Choice Voting:

1. Can we come up with a clearly stated statement of what problem or problems the Charter change is to solve?
2. Is there meaningful information that the items stated are legitimate problems that warrant a change to the Charter?
3. Is there any evidence or confidence that the change will in fact solve the problem or problems?
4. Are there any other potential un-intended negative consequences from making the ordinance change or if uncertain of any negative consequences what reasonable effort would be needed to determine the answer?
5. Can the above questions be thoroughly answered within the accelerated time frame needed to get the Charter Amendment on the November 2020 election?
6. Does the acceleration of the process align with our traditional approach and giving significant charter amendments thoughtful consideration and allowing robust community engagement before making a recommendation?

Corrine Heine

From: John Northrup
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 9:56 AM
To: Bradley Schaeppi
Cc: Corrine Heine
Subject: Re: Charter Commission Suggestion--Schaeppi

Council Member Schaeppi,

Thank you for your input and comments. You mention important topics, and some are already on our list.

We will work to have your suggestions covered in the study.

Best regards,

-John Northrup

From: Bradley Schaeppi
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 11:56:46 AM
To: John Northrup
Subject: Charter Commission Suggestion--Schaeppi

Commissioner Northrup.

I appreciate you reaching out through the City Attorney. On Monday night's Council Session I commented that I appreciate the Charter Commission's role, look forward to their recommendation, and keep an open mind as I am not an expert in Ranked Choice Voting.

My suggestions:

1. **Cost, Implementation, and Software.** I believe there is a lot of data on improving systems to count RCV ballots as it has become more common. As one councilmember, I'd like to hear specifics on the latest related to how Minnetonka staff can use or license any systems to quickly process RCV ballots in a safe manner. I understand handcounts were the old way and this is transitioning, but don't know specifics. If there is a way to connect again with Minneapolis or other cities to learn about the system and cost that would be helpful. Obviously, comparing apples to apples in staff time and dollars of existing v. RCV would be best.
2. **Exhausted Ballots.** I believe there is an opinion out there about RCV "exhausted ballots" and a ballot not counting towards the final winner. My personal take is that concept is not unique to RCV, but a standard ballot can also select a losing candidate--the difference is when in the process is the ballot "exhausted." That said, I'd prefer the City and Charter Commission comment/address "exhausted ballots" as I highly value each vote (I won my election in recount by 3 votes) and real and perceived concerns about ballots counting.

Thank you very much for welcoming my comments.
Bradley Schaeppi

Corrine Heine

From: Corrine Heine
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 11:39 AM
To: Charter Commission Mail List
Subject: FW: Ranked Choice Voting

-----Original Message-----

From: Jen Bouchard <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 11:31 AM
To: Corrine Heine <cheine@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

Thank you for your commitment to serving Minnetonka residents as appointed representatives. As an elected official myself, I know what a privilege and responsibility it is to serve such a diverse and evolving community.

I am writing to let you know that I support Ranked Choice Voting and sincerely hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November.

This issue has been discussed for more than a year with a wide and robust community conversation. True representation is about bringing the priorities of the people you serve to the table and empowering them to help shape the community they want to live in. With this in mind, it is imperative that we as Minnetonka residents have the opportunity to vote on if RCV is right for Minnetonka. The 2020 election, when turnout is expected to be at historic highs, is the best opportunity to have all our residents weigh in on this issue. Thank you for your continued efforts.

Sincerely,
Jen Westmoreland Bouchard

Corrine Heine

From: Corrine Heine
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 11:39 AM
To: Charter Commission Mail List
Subject: FW: Ranked Choice Voting

-----Original Message-----

From: Liz Heuser [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 11:29 AM
To: Corrine Heine <cheine@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because ...I feel it is the fairest, most comprehensive way to vote to insure we actually elect the person most people want.

Sincerely,
Liz Heuser
Comstock Rd 55391
Sent from my iPad

Corrine Heine

From: Corrine Heine
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 11:40 AM
To: Charter Commission Mail List
Subject: FW: Ranked Choice Voting

From: Katie Pierson [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 11:25 AM
To: Corrine Heine <cheine@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because it's authentically democratic, truly letting the people decide.

Sincerely,

Corrine Heine

From: Corrine Heine
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 11:40 AM
To: Charter Commission Mail List
Subject: FW: Ranked Choice Voting

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 11:16 AM
To: Corrine Heine <cheine@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because I believe it leads to more voices being heard since it allows people to vote for their choice without feeling that it may be a "throw-away".

Sincerely,

Libby Engelbret

Corrine Heine

From: Corrine Heine
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 12:07 PM
To: Charter Commission Mail List
Subject: FW: Ranked Choice Voting

From: Diana Klein <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 11:56 AM
To: Corrine Heine <cheine@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because all voters need to feel their vote means something and Ranked Choice Voting is that way.

I sincerely feel our democracy depends on this.

Sincerely,

Corrine Heine

From: Corrine Heine
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 1:51 PM
To: Charter Commission Mail List
Subject: FW: Ranked Choice Voting

-----Original Message-----

From: Peter Hefty Sammond [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 12:26 PM
To: Corrine Heine <cheine@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because I believe it will give us government that more nearly represents the average citizen's political views.

Sincerely,

Peter H. Sammond

Corrine Heine

From: Corrine Heine
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 1:51 PM
To: Charter Commission Mail List
Subject: FW: Ranked Choice Voting

-----Original Message-----

From: susan boren [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 12:51 PM
To: Corrine Heine <cheine@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because I believe it will improve our democratic process and encourage candidates of all parties to campaign on the issues.

Sincerely,

Susan S. Boren
16523 Black Oaks Circle
Wayzata, MN. 55391
Sent from my iPad

Corrine Heine

From: Corrine Heine
Sent: Friday, May 22, 2020 11:18 AM
To: Charter Commission Mail List
Subject: FW: Ranked Choice Voting

From: Kathleen Kaysinger <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 11:09 PM
To: Corrine Heine <cheine@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because it has been shown to be an effective and efficient method to elect officials. This method allows any given voter to have an impact on each election and to feel valued in voting. It engages voters and is likely to result in higher voter turnout and an electorate more satisfied with the results. It requires a more civil method of campaigning, sorely needed in this country.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Kaysinger
Minnetonka resident

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Corrine Heine

From: Corrine Heine
Sent: Friday, May 22, 2020 11:19 AM
To: Charter Commission Mail List
Subject: FW: Ranked Choice Voting

-----Original Message-----

From: Caryn Schall [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 22, 2020 1:13 AM
To: Corrine Heine <cheine@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because it's a no-brainer! It's a win-win for everyone. And Lord knows, the political system in the U.S. is in serious need of a makeover. This is a great way to start the process!

Sincerely,

Caryn Schall
2841 Ella Lane
Mtka, 55305

Corrine Heine

From: Corrine Heine
Sent: Friday, May 22, 2020 1:24 PM
To: Charter Commission Mail List
Subject: FW: Ranked Choice Voting

From: mr carlson [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 22, 2020 12:45 PM
To: Corrine Heine <cheine@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because:

- Ensures winners with broad majority support
- Eliminates the low-turnout, unrepresentative primary
- Saves taxpayers' dollars
- Promotes more inclusive and representative elections
- Provides more choice for voters
- Ends spoiler and wasted vote dynamics
- Fosters more civil campaigns

Sincerely,

Christopher Carlson

Corrine Heine

From: Carter Glendenning [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 22, 2020 4:24 PM
To: jnorthrop@minnetonkamn.gov
Cc: Corrine Heine
Subject: RANK CHOICE VOTING RCV Many years of study on this topic
Attachments: RCV #6 JT1.0 2.docx

Hi, Charter Commission Director John Northrop
Attached, you will find information on the Pros & Con's of Rank Choice Voting.(RCV)

You will find a concise detailed explanation of RCV from the MINNETONKA VOTERS STANDPOINT. In theory, RCV is a wonderful idea, however it will not work as intended. Please read, and if you have any questions of the Presentation (attached), call me at 952-449-1026 OR email me at above address.

I have been studying this RCV, not only locally, but nationally since 2018. I feel very confident in the information laid out. I have spoken with my relatives from Duluth.

I was asked to give a presentation before the Mtka-Eden Prairie-Hopkins LEAGUE OF WOMEN'S VOTERS a year ago. After presentations made by FairVote, and myself, the LWV voted RCV down. Peggy Kvam was the President.

Question John, shall I send this attachment out to the other members of the Mtka Charter Commission. Or will you do so prior to your May 26th meeting so they have time to think regarding the points made. If you say Yes, can you steer me to their Email address'?

I do understand that time is of essence!

Another Question, shall I send to the MTKA city council?

Please respond that you rec'd this communication

Humbly
Carter Glendenning
4501 Laramie Trl

PRESENTATION BEFORE THE MINNETONKA CHARTER COMMISSION May 26th, 2020
Regarding the Advantages & Disadvantages of RANK CHOICE VOTING [RCV]

This presentation is meant to emphasize “How the everyday Mtna voter would see RCV affecting their lives & City.” A presentation was made to the League of Women Voters – Minnetonka, Eden Prairie, & Hopkins Chapter a year ago at the invitation of President Peggy Kvam by this Writer.

In a perfect world, RCV is a wonderful way to proceed as it allows more citizens to participate; it can eliminate the high costs of having a 2nd election-in the case of run-offs OR reduces even the historical concept of a party affiliated Election; (ie Democrats & Republicans can run against each other at the One & Only Election); it allows the poor man’s Candidate to run; it would reduce the high cost of money spent to try & win an election; it would eliminate “Strategic Voting” meaning where a campaign group would tell their people to NOT participate in any Second Choice Ranked Voting.

In summary, positive results for choosing RCV includes: less money for Minnetonka to spend conducting elections; Candidates of any “stripe” can run; allows for a more diverse choice of the many participants; eliminates Party Affiliation candidates (depending); there would be no Strategic voting by a political party/ group.

However, from a practical standpoint, it is a far different case when a potential voter is standing at the ballot box.

RVC will not work because the Voters under RCV, are not going to place an X in column 1 for Candidate 1, then place another X for Candidate 3 in column 2, then place an X in column 3 for Candidate 5, ETC.

Then start same process over the Second Elective Office, >>> place an X in column 1 for Candidate 2, then in column 2, place an X next to candidate 4, then for column 3, place an X next to Candidate 1.

Then for Third Elective office, ditto, ditto.

In studying this thoroughly in 2018, & 2019, the following was found: if RCV were to be instituted: (Note, this is strictly from the Voters’ position)>> 1. The VOTER is given a thick ballot (thicker than ever before)— this Voter may just be coming home from a busy day at work. His or her mind is still on the successes & failures of that day. The VOTER has had a hectic drive since he/she has just gotten off the crowded highway to come & vote. The VOTER is tired. The Voter is planning what to have for dinner. Family comes first, not this Voting Thing. The Voter may not have had time to look at more than 2 or 3 candidates for each Open position, prior to the day of the vote. When they pick up the ballot, and are bewildered over the many ranks/columns to fill out. Voter

needs to get out of there and home to his/her kids. The Kids are having problems in math. So VOTER decides to only use columns 1 & 2 for all 5 positions to be filled.

Maybe, another VOTER votes in early AM, stands in line, and the line is not only long but very very slow. You ask, why is it so slow, as you have that important meeting at 9am you may miss. When you are eventually handed a ballot, you are astounded at how thick the Ballot is. Then you note how many Ranked choices you must make. Then you recall the 9am meeting you must make. You determine THE TIME AVAILABLE you have since you have these other pressing obligations>> your job OR children Or Mother in hospital OR ??? What Is the most important job in your life. You vote for 1 candidate and leave. NOTE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT. SEE BELOW.

In this actual scenario, there is the retired person, who has much time on their hands, OR the unemployed worker, OR the widowed/ widower who also has a lot of time available, but has little interest in the actual positions. They go to vote, and place an X in every available column/ candidate regardless of EXPERIENCE.

There is a greater chance of Older voters becoming confused due to:

- a. Respondence Annoyance & Respondent Error. According to Great Book.com, when the list is long, Voters will disregard the Candidates after the first 3 choices.
- b. No matter how clear the instructions are, some people will still get mixed up.

Source— Great Book.com.

In the 2009 Mpls elections, people did not place a second choice on the ballot for the following above reasons; and thereby allowing a much weaker Candidate to “sneak” into office. Such was case in Mpls Park District 5, Ward 11 in 2009.

The conclusion here; there is a much greater chance of an unqualified person being elected.

RCV May eventually lead to the elimination of Primaries & thereby moving to “Jungle” elections. (In California, this is now being done— they take the top 2 vote getters and THEY HAVE A RUNOFF GENERAL ELECTION.)

RCV is designed to increase the power of Weaker Candidates. RCV increases the Voters Time by at least ½ hour—- now multiply that by 4000 voters in off-year elections in Minnetonka.

RCV places Voters in a position where they are to make decisions on Candidates they votes are thrown out.

In my earlier scenario describing the situation of a two voters being in a hurry... Both of those ballots would be eliminated because of the rules not being followed. If a ballot has five candidates, each and every voter MUST, not may, MUST vote for all five

candidates for that ballot to be valid and counted. That's true with all the races with Rank Choice Voting, if four candidates, there MUST be four votes, not three, not two, not one. Any ballots not meeting the requirement will be invalid and not counted. This is how many inexperienced and unqualified candidates get elected. I won't name any here.

Note: all statements made above are based on facts, which are available by contacting me.

At the beginning of this presentation, I began by stating "a presentation was made approximately 1 year ago to the League of Woman's Voters of Mtka, Eden Prairie, & Hopkins."

After a very similar Presentation, the LWV voted NO to RCV.

Thank you for your time.

| Carter Glendenning, Minnetonka resident who has studied this issue for 3 years.

Corrine Heine

From: Corrine Heine
Sent: Sunday, May 24, 2020 10:00 AM
To: Charter Commission Mail List
Subject: FW: Ranked Choice Voting

From: paula ramaley [REDACTED] >
Sent: Saturday, May 23, 2020 8:53 PM
To: Corrine Heine <cheine@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because it is:

- cost-efficient (by eliminating the primary)
- will encourage candidates who might not otherwise step forward do so (as they will not have to deal with a miniscule turnout primary and be able have a longer runway to get their ideas out to the community)
- increase voter engagement - because candidates will be engaging them more.

This will make, in my opinion, for a more vibrant local democracy with a more informed and engaged community.

Sincerely,

Paula Ramaley
17306 County Road 101 West
Wayzata, MN 55391

Corrine Heine

From: Mary Kirchhof <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, May 24, 2020 10:59 PM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Rank Choice Voting

Dear Charter Commission,

I am writing as a long time Minnetonka resident and an election judge to ask you to complete your work regarding Rank Choice Voting in a timely manner to ensure RCV is on the ballot this November.

When first learning about Rank Choice Voting from the League of Women Voters was encouraged to hope for that our elections could be more inclusive, allow new voices into the process, and increase civility in our public discourse.

Appreciated attending the commission meetings prior to our shelter in place needs and so appreciate your commitment to our city.

It's tough with this pandemic but we need voter engagement even more now with such serious issues facing us.

Rank Choice voting allows citizens to believe their vote matters as it surely does.

Sincerely,
Mary Kirchhof
5919 Wyngate Lane
Minnetonka, MN 55345

Corrine Heine

From: Sandy <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 7:43 AM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because I think it will encourage more participation in recruiting candidates and voters. I have lived in Minnetonka for 45 years and been an election judge for 10 years. I think this works well in other places and think we should try it here.

Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone Sandy Brandt

Corrine Heine

From: David Haeg [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 10:15 AM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: May 26th Charter Commission Meeting

Dear Charter Commission Members,

I strongly urge you to complete your study of Ranked Choice Voting. This voting reform has been proven to make the city council elections process more efficient, more appealing to voters and welcoming to would-be candidates. Don't we want to have more competitive elections, drawing more voters who understand more about how our city works and what the issues are? Isn't that the point of democracy, and one of the cornerstones of civic engagement?

You must recognize that, despite being a successful city in many regards, our local elections process is flawed. Nearly everyone agrees that our single day special elections are problematic - a plurality winner on a single voting day means that someone could win with just a small share of the vote. But opinions are somehow more divided about our primary/general election process. Our low-turnout primary is laughably unrepresentative of our city - any objective person would say that 4% voter turnout is simply undemocratic, and claiming that this is somehow good (i.e. "those are the smart people who know the issues") is either delusional or elitist. This primary also serves to scare away candidates, and our already small pool of potential city council candidates gets smaller when newcomers are required to finance and campaign for 2 voting days. (As a side note, Minnetonka is one of the last sizable cities in the state that still holds odd-year primaries. St. Louis Park ended theirs after the 2017 race and Bloomington is putting RCV on the November 2020 ballot in an effort to end theirs. Being the last city to stop a bad process isn't the kind of "exceptionalism" that Minnetonka should be known for.) Ranked Choice Voting is an elegant solution to both of these issues: our single day special elections would yield a consensus winner, and we could eliminate this ridiculous primary to save our city money and increase the number of candidates and voters for a November election.

Ranked Choice Voting will save our city money. It is a fully legal and constitutional form of voting. It is an intuitive way of voting that is not hard for people. It does not harm poor communities of people of color. Voters overwhelming like it. These are not my claims, they were shared by Professor Schultz, the expert you asked to testify in January, and are backed up by a wealth of research. Please disregard the claims of people who oppose this issue by incorrectly claiming otherwise.

Please complete your study of this issue and let the voters make the final decision in November 2020. Thank you for your service to our city, both as charter commission members and for your many other previous roles and contributions.

David Haeg
17045 Chiltern Hills Rd
Minnetonka, MN 55345

Corrine Heine

From: Ben Wilinski [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 10:57 AM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because more candidates working together to sincerely form coalitions will expand political conversations, discourage negative campaigning, and engage a larger portion of the electorate.

Sincerely,

Ben Wilinski - 612-702-1326
5727 high park dr
Minnetonka MN 55345

Corrine Heine

From: Gohman, Kim [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 11:41 AM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because it makes every vote count. It ensures choice and helps people vote FOR their favorite candidate, vs against the "lessor of two evils".

Please ensure that RCV is on the ballot in November.

Sincerely,
Kim Gohman
Minnetonka resident

Disclaimer

This e-mail message is being sent solely for use by the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by phone or reply by e-mail, delete the original message and destroy all copies. Thank you.

Corrine Heine

From: Jack Barbier [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 11:44 AM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because I, like many Americans, are disillusioned by the two-party system which does not effectively represent a big swath of the "in between" population. The "right" and "left" are simply too far apart, causing rancor, gridlock, and anger.

RCV is an idea whose time has come. This is very, very important.

Sincerely, Jack Barbier, ChFC
Minnetonka

Corrine Heine

From: Kris FALK [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 11:45 AM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because ...I believe it is the best way to allow people to vote for the candidate they want to elect.

Sincerely,
Kristine Falk

Sent from my iPhone

Corrine Heine

From: Barb Westmoreland [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 11:45 AM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: For Charter Commission Chair & Members

Dear Chair Northrup and Charter Commission Members Allendorf, Anderson, Cheleen, Larson, Schneider, Sodergren, Tolliver, and Wiersum,

Thank you for reconvening on May 26 using the remote virtual style of meeting.

Who would have guessed that Commission Member Karen Anderson was foreshadowing this historic moment when she joined you remotely for your first Ranked Choice Voting study session (and last meeting) on January 28!

Your work on the study sessions about Ranked Choice Voting for Minnetonka municipal elections is critical for impartially presenting the facts for residents, city council members and city staff. We are all in a learning process together, with your wise lead.

These are some questions I hope you will address in the upcoming study sessions:

August Primary Elections

- What is the average percent of voter turnout over the past 5 city primaries?
- What is the estimated cost to taxpayers for a primary election? Estimated total staff hours?
- Polling past candidates for office (winners & losers): Did our current 5 month election process, with a potential of 2 election days, weigh heavily in your decision to run for office? Would you have preferred to file in late summer and have one Election Day in November using Ranked Choice Voting - winning by 50% + 1 of the voters?

The Use of Special Election vs Appointment for a Vacated Seat on the City Council

- Compile a list of all City Council members over the last 10 years:
Who was appointed? Who was elected in a special election? Who was elected in a November municipal election?
(Some current & past members might fit more than one category.)
- Is the appointment process used more frequently than a special election? Does this fit our value/goal of a citizen elected council?
- Does Ranked Choice Voting for special elections ensure that the winner has 50% + 1 support of participating Minnetonka voters?

I'm looking forward to answers to these questions and all of yours, as well.

I hope you will reschedule the postponed March 17 agenda. Your list of election specialists will provide all of us with valuable information.

Ranked Choice Voting for Minnetonka should be decided by the voters on this November 2020 ballot. Please work toward this goal.

Thank you,
Barb Westmoreland

- Lifelong resident of Minnetonka
- Retired Educator
- Leader of 10 consecutive years of Hopkins Schools Kids Voting (students accompanied parents to their precinct and voted on their own ballot)
- Current Precinct Judge
- Current Voter Services Co-Chair for our local League of Women Voters - MEPH

Corrine Heine

From: Elaine Rothman [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 11:49 AM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November.

Thank you for your working to put this issue,

Elaine Rothman

Corrine Heine

From: Annika Graif [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 11:55 AM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because I believe it levels the playing field for candidates, results in fairer elections, and is more reflective of the wants of the electorate.

Sincerely,
Annika Graif

Corrine Heine

From: Mary Pat Blake [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 12:01 PM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Letter for Charter Commission on RCV
Attachments: Letter to Mtka Charter Commission from MP Blake - May 25 2020.docx

Thank you.

Mary Pat Blake
President



Office: 952-500-8930
Mobile: 314-409-3111
www.MaryPatBlake.com
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/marypatblake>

May 25, 2020

Dear Respected Minnetonka Charter Commission,

I am writing this letter to you on Memorial Day, which is very fitting. We are a nation that has always changed and evolved to right a wrong, and to improve the situation for its citizens, as the need arises. That need is here, now, in Minnetonka. I sincerely hope you will do your jobs, complete the study of Ranked Choice Voting, and recommend to the City Council to approve its adoption in Minnetonka.

What is the problem that needs to be addressed in Minnetonka? The voting system in Minnetonka is broken and unfair. The problem is that many, many Minnetonka residents don't run for representative positions because they know they can't win. They know that they are outside the power hierarchy in Minnetonka. They know this because:

1. The Minnetonka City Council has been 100% white, and predominantly white males, for decades. This does not represent the entire citizenry of Minnetonka. It does represent the power structure.
 - a. Councilwoman Kissy Coakley's success in winning the District 4 seat in 2019 is a welcome change. But how many white candidates running in Minnetonka had to give up their jobs, as Kissy did, so they could campaign door to door for 7 months ahead of the election?
 - b. In contrast, her white male opponent barely campaigned, and relied on the ads containing Mayor Brad Weirsum's and other past mayors' and councilmen's endorsements. This happened after Mayor Weirsum told Kissy he would not be endorsing any candidates in the campaign. I live in District 4 and saw these campaigns in action.
 - c. This is a good representation of the power structure in action.
2. Many City Council members over decades have been appointed by the Council to fill open Council seats instead of holding elections. When it's time for the next election, the appointed Councilmembers have a big advantage over anyone else who wants to run for that seat. Usually the appointed person wins the election. In this way, the power structure in Minnetonka continues its stronghold.

There is a broken and unfair system in Minnetonka for the election of the City Council.

How will adopting Ranked Choice Voting help to evolve this into a better situation for the people of Minnetonka?

1. Ranked Choice Voting eliminates the need for Minnetonka's traditional August primaries.
 - a. This saves an estimated \$20,000 per primary in which we typically have about 4% of the voters voting.
 - b. This means that 96% of the voters won't have the 4% selecting the candidates for the final election.

- c. This means that 100% of the Minnetonka voters will have the full slate of candidates to choose from.
2. More people will run for office, because with Ranked Choice Voting, they will be able to make it to the final ballot on Election Day, and not be eliminated in the primary.

Isn't this what it's all about: **Representative government?**

I believe in representative government in which the representatives actually reflect the many and beautiful diversities of the people.

This is why we need Ranked Choice Voting in Minnetonka. So that our City Council reflects who we are as a citizenry, so the beliefs, needs, and opportunities of all our people will be addressed.

Thank you for voting to recommend approval of Ranked Choice Voting to the City Council.

Respectfully,

Mary Pat Blake

President, Blake Strategic Consulting, LLC

Carlson School of Management - Board of Overseers

Board Director – multiple companies

14800 Wychewood Road
Minnetonka, MN 55345

Corrine Heine

From: David Dayhoff [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 12:05 PM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you! ***** Dear Charter Commissioners: I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because ... Sincerely,

David Dayhoff
5525 Conifer Trail
Minnetonka

Corrine Heine

From: Carolyn Smith <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 2:07 PM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you! *****
Dear Charter Commissioners: I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot
for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because ...
Sincerely, Carolyn Smith

[REDACTED]

From: Kirk J <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 5:38 PM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because I think it leads to candidates who are less extreme and have broader overall support. Although I think it's less of an issue in local elections, I think that getting people used to it in those elections sets a good example and paves the way for doing it for bigger offices.

Sincerely,

Corrine Heine

From: Jennifer Munt <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 8:51 PM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Support for RCV

Greetings, Charter Commission!

Thanks for the time and energy you've devoted to studying Ranked Choice Voting during the past nine months.

I strongly support Ranked Choice Voting. It's a simple change to the ballot that allows voters to rank candidates in order of their preference on the ballot. The rankings are used to conduct an instant runoff to ensure winners receive a majority of voter support.

It's a commonsense reform that gives voters more choice and more voice in the electoral process. It also fosters more civil, inclusive, participatory and representative elections. Our community is evolving and our local elections need to evolve with it.

Please urge the Minnetonka City Council to adopt Ranked Choice Voting for city elections.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Munt
5261 Beachside Drive
Minnetonka, MN 55343
[REDACTED]

Corrine Heine

From: Bryana French [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 10:11 AM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Please forward this email to the Charter Commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I support Ranked Choice Voting and hope it's on the ballot for Minnetonka voters in November. I support Ranked Choice Voting because it is a [more equitable option](#), reduces the limitations of two-party voting system, and allows us to vote for who we genuinely think will do the best job. The [City of Minneapolis](#) has already used Rank Choice voting with great success. Please consider helping Minnetonka follow in the right direction.

Sincerely,

Bryana French
Minnetonka Resident

Corrine Heine

From: Corrine Heine
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 11:04 AM
To: Charter Commission Mail List
Subject: FW: Next Commission Meeting - request to speak
Attachments: Chart Commission Slides 5-26-20.pptx

From: Mark Francis <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 11:00 AM
To: Corrine Heine <cheine@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Re: Next Commission Meeting - request to speak

To the Charter Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with additional information on RCV. Included in your information packet is a set of 15 slides that I hope will be able to stand on its own as you read it as well as contribute to your study and thought processes. After speaking with Corrine Heine I understand that I can present this to you live at a later date and prior to making your recommendation to the City Council. I would appreciate that opportunity as I have found RCV to be a very involved issue where multiple scenarios can be discussed and debated.

As a business professional I help companies in the Twin Cities better understand the strategic and tactical issues they face. It requires me to be open minded and analytical as I break down a problem to its essence. I have endeavored to do the same with RCV after reading a few letters to the editor in the Sun Sailor in favor of RCV. I did not go into my research leaning one way or the other, however, after researching I am concerned about how the system works.

I look forward to my opportunity to speak to you in the future.

Sincerely,

Mark Francis

Important Aspects of RCV

Objective: Provide information to the Charter Commission so members can:

- Become more clear on terminologies
- Make additional considerations during your study
- See the differences between theories and real examples
- Consider suggestions

“...electing candidates with a majority of support...”

Below are proponents' explanations of how RCV works (note highlights)

“Ensures winners with **broad majority support**”
Source: www.rcvminnetonka.org/

The first preferences of each voter are counted. If any candidate receives a **majority** (50% +1) of the first preferences, they win. If no candidate reaches a **majority**, then the candidate with the fewest first preferences is eliminated. The voters who preferred the eliminated candidate then have their vote moved to their 2nd preference. The ballots are counted again, if a candidate has a **majority**, they are the winner. If not, candidates continue to be eliminated...
Source: : *FairVote Executive Summary, City Council Study Session of Sept. 9, 2019*

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How the Definition of “Majority” Changes

What’s Not Being Said

- In the very first round the candidate receiving >50% has earned a true **majority** of all votes.
- When RCV proponents talk about subsequent rounds (those that occur when no candidate has received >50%) they continue to use the term “**majority**” although it now means something different.
- Ballots can become exhausted and a percentage of votes do not count toward the final decision.
- “**Majority**” now means the majority of surviving votes; the majority of the votes that did not become exhausted.
- The continued use of “**majority**” without this explanation is misleading.

Ballot Exhaustion

- Ballot Exhaustion: Occurs when rankings on a voter's ballot prevent their vote from being counted and determining the election's end result.
- A ballot becomes exhausted when a voter:
 - ✓ Overvotes (ex: Voter accidentally ranks two candidates as their first choice.)
 - ✓ Exhausts their choices This is inherent in RCV. A voter can list their preferences such that when applied to a runoff round it is for candidate who is already eliminated. The vote is taken out of the election.
 - ✓ Undervotes (ex: Voter ranks only one candidate on their ballot and that candidate is eventually eliminated from the contest before the final round.)
- In plain speak: It's as if these voters never showed up on Election Day.
- The topic of ballot exhaustion appears not to have been discussed other than once in passing by the Council, Commission or FairVote. The term "ballot exhaustion" never shows up on rcvminnetonka.org's website.
- Ballot exhaustion is extremely important to understand (and to explain to voters) as it is an integral part of RCV's mechanics.

Undervoting

Potential Punishment of Loyalists, Seniors, Busy Citizens

“Instead of just picking one candidate per race, voters are allowed (but not required) to make a 1st/2nd/3rd choice.”

Source: FairVote Executive Summary, City Council Study Session of Sept. 9, 2019

While true, not ranking all candidates brings the risk of ballot exhaustion.

Who undervotes?

- Party Loyalists who will only rank those of their political party.
- Seniors (who vote in higher proportions) and traditionalists who have always voted for one candidate.
- Busy citizens who only rank the candidates they have researched.

If these voters only choose one candidate (or a limited number) on their ballot, it is more likely to become exhausted, giving those who fully complete their ballot more influence over the electoral process.

Proponents' Unbalanced Position on Ballot Exhaustion and Undervoting

"There's no such thing as a vote that doesn't matter." Barack Obama

"...in a city council race the rate of exhausted ballots is 10%...voters who do not fully rank their ballot...If that is the voter's preference, it is perfectly fine. We encourage voters to understand the implications." (paraphrased)

J. Massey, FairVote MN, 1/28/20 Charter Commission, minute 19:00

"...an "exhausted" ballot does not equal a disenfranchised voter. It simply means that a voter didn't have a preference for any more candidates on the ballot after selecting their first or second preferences."

www.rcvminnetonka.org, FAQ page/ "Common Myths"

- Aren't citizens who undervote actually expressing their preferences when they do not rank all candidates?
- Why shouldn't we consider that just as valid?
- There are two sets of implications to be considered.

Ballot Exhaustion and Undervoting RCV's Created Dilemma

What proponents are really saying:

"Voters, here's your choice: You can partially fill out your ballot, risk that it becomes exhausted and does not go to deciding the final outcome OR you can completely fill out the ballot and risk that your vote supports a candidate that you would not vote for otherwise."

This is a Cornelian dilemma: A dilemma where a person must choose between two courses of action that either of which will have a harmful effect on themselves or others.

How is this fair to people who have expressed a just as valid set of preferences?

Does this fit with the presented benefit of inclusiveness?

11%

“On average, approximately 11% of ballots become exhausted.”

61%

“The eventual winner wins with a fake majority 61% of the time.”

“As a result of ballot exhaustion, the winner in all four cases receives less than a majority of the total votes cast.”

Study of 600,000 ballots cast by voters in four CA elections (Pierce Cnty 2008, Oakland, S. Leandro 2010, S. Francisco 2011)

Table 3
Rate of ballot exhaustion.

	Oakland	Pierce county	San Francisco	San Leandro
First-Round Votes	119,408	298,912	194,046	22,421
Rate of Exhaustion	11.6%	10.2%	27.1%	9.6%

Maine’s 2018 Second Congressional race (incumbent Poliquin; challengers Golden, Bond and Hoar) 289,624 votes were cast in the first round. Golden was declared the winner in the 2nd round of tabulation with 142,440 votes, 49.18% of ballots cast in the election. More than 8,000 ballots were exhausted... allowing **the eventual winner to take the contest with less than a true majority of the votes cast.**

2010 race for San Francisco Board of Supervisors (City Council): After 20 rounds of tabulation, there were 9,608 exhausted ballots, whereas the winner garnered only 4,321 votes. **The victor took fewer than 25% of the votes.**

NOT TRUE

“The benefits of RCV are that it... results in winners supported by the majority...” Source: FairVote presentation to Charter Commission, 1/28/20

Costs

Unstudied, Unknown, TBD

- First time education, outreach could reach over \$25k
- Additional city staff time for tabulation
- Additional staff needed if implemented
- On-going additional staff (full time employee ~\$100k/yr)
- Costs for technology, supplies

Source for the above: City council Study Session (Item #2), 9/9/19

- Post-implementation Studies, Recommendations and Adjustments (City of Minneapolis: In 2006 Minneapolis voters approved RCV to elect municipal offices; first used in 2009; 2013 & 2017 studies with recommendations; continued adjustments)

Common Sense Question: Will any cost savings actually be significant?

Primaries – Turnout

“RCV guarantees more complete voter participation...”

Source: FairVote presentation to Mtka Charter Commission 1/28/20

Ranked choice ballots have suppressed voter turnout, especially among those segments of the electorate that are already least likely to participate. RCV has resulted in decreased turnouts up to 8% in non-presidential elections. Low-propensity voters are already less likely to participate in elections that do not coincide with congressional or presidential races. ... Moreover, RCV exacerbates economic and racial disparities in voting. Voting errors and spoiled ballots occur far more often.

Source: AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF KANSAS, Oct. 2017

A study of four cities in California that adopted ranked-choice voting in the early 2000s found that “voter turnout has remained stable when compared to previous elections.”

Source: Electoral Studies, An International Journal, Nov. 2014

The empirical evidence is mixed but tends to show that ranked-choice voting slightly depresses turnout relative to plurality elections.

Source: Maine Heritage Policy Institute

Primaries – Turnout

Common Sense Question: Why not direct our resources to address our current system that we already know and understand? (Instead of adopting one that we do not?)

- Proponents have a long list of benefits, promises and guarantees.
- Everyone can find info to support or debunk, argue for or against.
- Everyone would agree with the proponents goals but not necessarily the RCV system when they understand it in its entirety.
- We need to truly understand how it works.
- There are also other issues like rigging that require study.

Suggestions to Consider

- Fix what we currently have to increase primary turnout. It is more prudent.
- Quantify the RCV promises and guarantees.
- Incorporate these numbers as continuous requirements for RCV to fulfill in the city charter.
- If RCV fails to live up to requirements, then have a repeal mechanism built into the city's charter.

“Had the 96 elections we analyzed been decided by a plurality of the votes, 87 percent of the outcomes would remain the same: The end result of elections decided by ranked-choice voting closely mirrors the outcome that would be produced under traditional voting systems, begging the question of whether ranked-choice voting is worth the hassle it creates for voters and state government.

Source: The Maine Heritage Policy Center

**Who will tell voters that over
10% of their votes won't count
in future elections?**

Minnetonka's Charter Commission, Council and citizens deserve the complete picture of RCV