



## **CHARTER COMMISSION AGENDA**

**June 9, 2020 – 6:30 P.M.**

### **CHARTER COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING**

**To be held via WebEx**

1. Call to order
2. Roll call
3. Approve minutes of May 26, 2020 meeting
4. City attorney report regarding June 8, 2020 city council meeting
5. Question and answer session with election officials regarding ranked choice voting:
  - David Maeda, Director of Elections, Minnesota Secretary of State's Office
  - Ginny Helms, Elections Manager, Hennepin County
  - Melissa Kennedy, City Clerk, City of St. Louis Park
  - Minnetonka elections staff
6. Report from chair regarding work plan status and future meeting schedule

**Attachments:**

- a. Draft minutes, May 26, 2020 meeting
- b. Memo from City Attorney Corrine Heine re agenda items
- c. Memo from City Attorney Corrine Heine re communications update (informational)
- d. Comments received from the public

Due to the COVID-19 health pandemic, the charter commission's regular meeting place is not available. Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.021, commission members will participate in the meeting remotely via WebEx. Members of the public who desire to monitor the meeting remotely or to give input or testimony during the meeting can find instructions at <https://www.minnetonkamn.gov/government/virtual-meeting-information>.



UNAPPROVED  
DRAFT

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**MINUTES OF THE  
MINNETONKA CHARTER COMMISSION**

**May 26, 2020**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Northrup called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Members present: Dick Allendorf, Karen Anderson, John Cheleen, David Larson, John Northrup, Terry Schneider, Linnea Sodergren, LuAnn Tolliver, Brad Wiersum.

Members absent: None.

2. APPROVE MINUTES OF NOV. 12, 2019 MEETING AND JAN. 28, 2020 MEETING

Anderson moved, Cheleen seconded, to approve the minutes of the Nov. 12, 2019 meeting. By roll call vote, all voted in favor.

Anderson noted that she had identified some typographical errors, which the city attorney had corrected. Anderson moved, Larson seconded, to approve the minutes of the Jan. 28, 2020 meeting. By roll call vote, all voted in favor.

3. DISCUSSION OF RANKED CHOICE VOTING STUDY PROJECT AND WORK PLAN FOR PROJECT

City attorney Corrine Heine presented the staff report. Northrup stated that the commission had scheduled a meeting for March 17 that had been canceled, and he invited the commission to discuss the work plan going forward.

City attorney Heine informed the commission that the speakers for the March 17 meeting had been rescheduled to the June 9 charter commission meeting and that it might be difficult to reschedule them for another date. Schneider and Larson each commented that hearing from the election officials was necessary and that June 9 was an appropriate meeting for that purpose. Anderson concurred that the background put together for March 17 meeting was valuable and raised a lot of questions. She felt that election officials would provide a neutral view.

Northrup asked about other topics. Allendorf asked for information about cost comparisons, including a realistic comparison between conducting a primary and

ranked choice voting. Anderson asked to add the costs in a broader sense, including costs of informing voters and the public and the ongoing costs. She noted that the information from Minneapolis mentioned nine different items, including a voters guide, survey, outside consultant, independent analysis, publication of the amendment, and a new election website. Northrup stated that he wanted to understand the cost savings better, looking at a payback analysis of ranked choice voting over time. Allendorf indicated that some of the information had shown a need to increase staff, and he wanted to consider that ongoing cost. Wiersum suggested that the city could come up with a historical cost of primaries to come up with an annual average cost.

Schneider thought the commission should hear from both sides about the unintended consequences of approving ranked choice voting. He mentioned the potential to essentially disenfranchise a segment of voters who might find the process confusing. He questioned how the commission could verify that it would not be making the voting process unduly difficult, and how could those consequences be mitigated. He mentioned that when the charter was amended to change the mayor's term, there was due diligence by the commission and council in reaching out to the public before it went to the voters.

Tolliver asked whether the commission could identify issues for election staff to address on June 9. Northrup stated that the elections officials would not be giving presentations but will respond to questions. Schneider suggested that they should have a list of questions in advance of the meeting so the elections officials could be prepared. One of his questions was how you do recounts with ranked choice voting. He asked commission members to submit questions to the city attorney. The city attorney suggested that the questions be submitted by June 2 so that the officials would have time to prepare. Northrup expressed interest in the details on the recount that had occurred in Minneapolis.

Allendorf said he was interested in Dr. Morris's review of Minneapolis elections. He noted that the group that preferred the traditional method was the over-64 age group. He would like to hear more about that. Cheleen said it would be interesting to have information about those under age 64 and whether ranked choice voting would draw those voters in. Sodergren said it would be helpful if elections staff would comment on what they would have done differently, whether they encountered any snags that Minnetonka might avoid.

Northrup expressed interest in a voter outreach and education plan that would accomplish what Minnetonka wants to accomplish. Anderson wanted to know how the voter outreach plan would be handled with the pandemic still in place versus the traditional method. Going back to the cost issue, she thought the work plan should consider the cost of technology and equipment that might be needed, as well as

personnel costs. Northrup indicated that software is not available for fully automated ranked choice voting. One of his questions would be when a fully automated and certified system might be available for Minnetonka's use.

Schneider said he felt the commission needs to clearly define what problem the city is trying to solve. Then, once the problem is defined, the commission should look at whether there is evidence that ranked choice voting will solve or improve that problem. As a corollary, Cheleen said the commission should ask whether the city has enough time to really educate people before the November election. Larson asked whether this is a solution in search of a problem and noted that Minneapolis and St. Paul are much larger than Minnetonka. He would like to see whether St. Louis Park voters were happy with ranked choice voting.

Schneider said that raised another thought. As he recalled, there is no limit on how many candidates can run. He noted that when the city council has appointed to fill a vacancy, the city has received 25-30 applicants. He wondered how you manage the process.

Wiersum said the commission needs to make sure that there can be robust input. The commission needs to look at the issue from a number of sides and make sure it has considered all issues. Northrup said that Prof. Schultz had suggested that ranked choice voting gets new faces to run. He noted that incumbency has two sides – someone can be in office too long, but incumbents also have wisdom. He would like to know if the process encourages or discourages incumbency, and what value Minnetonka places on incumbency.

Schneider stated that it is not an all or nothing proposal. The commission should consider whether there are applications where ranked choice voting would be useful.

Schneider said the council could look at education and voter outreach could mean educating voters before they vote, but he wondered how the commission could do outreach to get direct feedback on how this might impact them. He wasn't sure how a community forum could be conducted during a pandemic. He felt the decision should not be rushed but should be thoughtful. He wondered if there was an ability to do a survey or sampling.

Wiersum said that the time table cuts out the notion of broad discourse and community input, and he is concerned because residents typically ask for more opportunity to comment. Allendorf said the commission needed to educate themselves, then determine how to educate council on why commission recommends what it does, and finally there would be a need to educate voters. The commission does not have time to do that by November.

Anderson said the commission needs to move ahead in good faith and schedule meetings. She said the issue has been driven by FairVote, and the commission needs to devote some time to hear other points of view. She noted that there is no organized opposition and the FairVote has advertised for paid advocates. She also said the commission should find out what the status was on legislative efforts to allow ranked choice voting. Schneider said that there raised questions about ranked choice voting and they should be invited to attend and participate. There should be one meeting focused on the opposing point of view.

Norhrup said he would like to understand more about how voter intent would be determined and how that impacts the ranked choice voting environment. He noted that Minneapolis and St. Paul have different processes for tabulation and also different ballot design, and he would like to understand why those cities do things differently. Anderson noted that Minneapolis allows three choices and St. Paul allows more.

Anderson said an overall question she has is whether ranked choice voting actually improves voter turnout. She noted that information from Minneapolis that had been in the March 17 packet indicated that might not be the case.

Schneider asked whether there was a consensus on the commission that Aug 10 is not a realistic timeline for getting the study done. He asked whether the commission should ask the council not to adopt the ordinance. Allendorf stated that he would favor that idea and would like to get the work done without being under pressure. Schneider said he did not see a consensus for the idea so that it might be best to let it ride. Wiersum said he would withhold opinion but he is curious about what others think. Northrup said he thinks the process will be informative and he doesn't think rushed a process is a good idea. He wants to do a diligent job and with the right amount of citizen input. Anderson said she felt a sense of pressure but wants to move forward in a good faith effort. She would like the council to know the commission is feeling rushed but will do the best it can within the time the council gives it. Tolliver said everyone wants to do a good job and is feeling rushed, and maybe the commission needs to have meetings in July. The commission also has the ability to extend the time if needed.

Wiersum said that the pandemic and ability to hold meetings remotely may provide more flexibility than if there were no pandemic. The city attorney noted that commission can meet remotely only because of the pandemic. Because the pandemic is unpredictable, she needs to schedule meetings on dates when a room is available at city hall, because it is not possible to predict a month in advance whether the commission will be able to meet remotely in the future.

Northrup said voter outreach is important. He felt the commission needed to work on a

plan for that right away. Schneider said that public engagement is one of the most important parts of the process. He wondered if there were other ways to get voter feedback. Anderson said she thought the commission's job was to get as much information as possible and report to the council, and the council would need to get voter input. Cheleen said the commission could move ahead to gather information and report to the council, but the commission could let the council know that the ability to get information to voters should be considered. Northrup said he was interested not as much in voter feedback as in ideas.

Heine said there is a difference between getting resident input to help the commission make a decision and providing information to voters to assist them in voting on the issue. She suggested that she might be able to provide an outline of a communications plan at the June 9 meeting.

Sodergren asked what the downside would be if the issue didn't go on the ballot in November. Larson said he thought it would be November 2021. Heine said the council could put the issue on the ballot in November 2021 or at a special election.

Wiersum said he wanted to be mindful of staff bandwidth. There is a presidential election, and the pandemic has stretched the resources for the communication staff. He want the commission to be realistic in what it is asking of staff.

Northrup asked whether there were other topics to be added to the work plan. Schneider suggested that the chair work with staff to set a work schedule and game plan that the commission could review on June 9.

Anderson wanted to know what cities have rejected or repealed ranked choice voting and why. The commission reviewed the work plan notes and completed its review of the plan. Wiersum wondered if there is a demographic look at whether exhausted ballots are more common with certain groups. Tolliver wondered whether undervoting is more common with an older demographic. Schneider said he had heard comments that some candidates focus on being placed as a second choice. Northrup mentioned the use of strategic voting. Allendorf would like to know if ranked choice voting brings in new candidates. A copy of the completed work plan is attached to these minutes.

4. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING

Northrup recapped the meeting schedule, with the elections staff on June 9. Schneider indicated the June 23 meeting would be a good time for unintended consequences and people with opposing viewpoints. For July meetings, Heine will determine room availability and poll commissioners on their availability. Northrup reiterated that the opportunity for resident input is important.

The next meeting of the commission is scheduled for June 9, 2020.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Anderson moved, Sodergren, to adjourn the meeting. By roll call voted, all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

LuAnn Tolliver  
Secretary

## DRAFT WORK PLAN – MAY 26, 2020 COMMISSION MEETING

### Elections staff

- How are recounts handled?
- What snags were encountered? What to do differently?
- How are votes tabulated? What technology is available?
- Differences in ballot design for Minneapolis and St. Paul and why
- Does RCV improve voter turnout?
- Strategy for output and education plan

### Opposing points of view

- Exhausted ballots and undervoting– demographics

### Unintended consequences of RCV

- Potential to disenfranchise voters due to confusion
- Ability to mitigate unintended consequences
- How to manage number of candidates running
- Encourage or discourage incumbency – does it bring in new candidates
- Strategic voting



- Does RCV promote partisan politics?
- Other

## Financial issues

- Costs of primaries and historical costs
- Staff costs for implementing RCV
- Costs for informing public as part of transition
- Ongoing costs for education, survey, consulting (Minneapolis)
- Technology costs – including tabulation
- Tabulation costs, including recounts

## Voter outreach and education plan

- What is the city's goal? How to maintain quality of city elections
- How to get input from residents in time of pandemic
- Plan to ensure voters are informed and educated on issue
- Ongoing costs of educating voters

## Information on status of legislative proposals

What cities have rejected or repealed RCV and why

**To:** Minnetonka Charter Commission  
**From:** Corrine Heine, City Attorney  
**Date:** June 2, 2020  
**Subject:** Meeting of June 9, 2020, Agenda Items 4, 5 and 6

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**4. City attorney report regarding June 8, 2020 city council meeting**

At its June 8, 2020 meeting, the city council is scheduled to consider the adoption of an ordinance proposing an amendment to the city charter to require the use of ranked choice voting. If adopted, the ordinance will be referred to the charter commission for review pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 410.12. The city attorney will provide a report to the commission at its June 9 meeting regarding the council's decision.

**5. Question and answer session with election officials regarding ranked choice voting**

This segment of the meeting was rescheduled from the March 17, 2020 meeting, which was canceled. That packet consisted of 167 pages of information, not including the minutes of prior meetings. Rather than duplicate the material, the March 17, 2020 meeting packet is incorporated by reference. Members may access the packet at the website link that follows this sentence. <https://www.minnetonkamn.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=6731>

Members were asked to notify the city attorney of questions that members have for the invited speakers. City staff will ask speakers to be prepared to answer those questions and, if responsive written material can be obtained prior to the June 9 meeting, it will be distributed in an addendum.

**6. Report from chair regarding work plan status and future meeting schedule**

At the May 26 meeting, the commission directed the chair and city attorney to propose a work schedule for the commission, based upon the work plan developed on May 26. As of the writing of this report, the staff is working to identify dates that commission members and meeting facilities are available. The chair anticipates being able to provide an update to the commission on June 9 regarding the status of the work plan and meeting schedule.

**To:** Minnetonka Charter Commission  
**From:** Corrine Heine, City Attorney  
**Date:** June 2, 2020  
**Subject:** Information regarding communications

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At its May 26 meeting, the commission expressed interest in developing a plan that would provide opportunities for residents and members of the public to provide input to the commission. The communications staff has taken the following actions:

- Information has been posted to the city's website and was emailed to thousands of subscribers prior to the May 18 and June 8 city council meetings.
- The June issue of the *Minnetonka Memo* features a brief article regarding the possible amendment, attached. The *Memo* should arrive in mailboxes prior to the June 8 council meeting and June 9 charter commission meeting.
- Information has been shared with the local media and posted to each of the city's social media accounts.

The city's communications manager, Kari Knoll, will attend the June 23 charter commission meeting. She will be able to respond to questions the commission may have about the communications plan.



## Ask a city planner

In each issue of the Minnetonka Memo, our planners answer a common question to help residents and businesses learn more about the planning process and available city resources.

### Question:

I'm preparing for a summer project. What should I know? How do I apply for a permit?

### Answer:

- Determine where the project will be on your property.
- Find your property survey or hire a surveyor to identify your property lines.
- Find project zoning information and fees at [minnetonkamn.gov/planningresources](http://minnetonkamn.gov/planningresources).
- Review permit requirements and apply for permits at [minnetonkamn.gov/permits](http://minnetonkamn.gov/permits).
  - If a contractor is doing the work, they should obtain the permit.
  - All permit applications must be submitted online. Once you've applied, you'll receive an email with instructions to upload project information.
- Call 952-939-8394 or email [permits@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:permits@minnetonkamn.gov) for questions or more information.

### Have a question?

Do you have a planning or zoning question? Email us at [zoning@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:zoning@minnetonkamn.gov), call 952-939-8290 or visit [minnetonkamn.gov/planning](http://minnetonkamn.gov/planning) for more information.



## Council to consider ordinance to allow for ranked choice voting

The Minnetonka City Council is expected to consider an ordinance to amend the city charter to allow for the possibility of ranked choice voting in city elections.

The ordinance was expected to be introduced at the Monday, May 18, 2020 city council meeting, which took place after the Minnetonka Memo went to print. If the ordinance was introduced, the council will hold a public hearing and act on the ordinance at its June 8, 2020 meeting.

If adopted, the ordinance will be submitted to the charter commission for review. The council would then decide if and when to include the ordinance on an upcoming ballot.

Minnetonka voters - not the city council - would ultimately decide if ranked choice voting will be used for city elections.

Visit [minnetonkamn.gov/rankedchoicevoting](http://minnetonkamn.gov/rankedchoicevoting) to learn more.



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 [@MinnetonkaMN](https://www.instagram.com/MinnetonkaMN)

 [City of Minnetonka](http://City of Minnetonka)



## Corrine Heine

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**From:** Brad Wiersum  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 26, 2020 11:27 AM  
**To:** John Northrup  
**Cc:** Geralyn Barone; Corrine Heine  
**Subject:** Charter Commission Role

Greetings John:

Thank you for the email. What I hope the Charter Commission does is conduct an objective overview of how Minnetonka votes, identify any problems and identify potential solutions to the identified problems. RCV may be one of any number of alternatives. I am hoping for a problem/solution approach, not a “change for the sake of change” approach.

I hope this is helpful.

Regards,

BJW

Brad Wiersum  
Mayor  
City of Minnetonka

## Corrine Heine

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**From:** Rebecca Schack  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 31, 2020 8:49 PM  
**To:** Corrine Heine  
**Cc:** John Northrup  
**Subject:** May 26 Charter Commission Meeting

Hello John,

I just noticed this e-mail was sitting in my outbox since last weekend. I am sending it now, for what it's worth, even though I know you've already stated your work:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input. My primary concerns are as follows:

1. Is there any evidence from cities already using Rank Choice Voting "RVC" (in Minnesota or elsewhere) that RCV increases the candidate base?
2. Is there any evidence from cities already using RVC (in Minnesota or elsewhere) that it increases voter interest/turnout.
3. Not including additional implementation costs, is there a significant cost differential between RVC and our current voting method.

Thank you again for your work hard work in addressing this issue so quickly.

Sincerely,  
Rebecca Schack  
Councilmember - Ward 2  
City of Minnetonka

On May 21, 2020, at 10:21 AM, Corrine Heine <cheine@minnetonkamn.gov> wrote:

Council members – John Northrup asked me to send you the following email:

City Council,

As you know, we have scheduled a special charter commission meeting on May 26 to develop an updated work plan for the charter commission study of rank choice voting.

While the charter commission will ultimately decide how the work plan will be organized, we want to be collaborative and invite you, if you like, for your input on the work plan.

If interested, please email a couple (but no more than three) topics that you would like the charter commission to consider reviewing and studying. Send them to my new city email at:

[jnorthrup@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:jnorthrup@minnetonkamn.gov).

I'll consolidate the input and suggestions and they will be considered for the updated work plan.

Thank you for considering this.

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**John E Northrup**  
**Minnetonka Charter Commission**

[<image002.png>](#)

**Corrine A. Heine** | City Attorney

City of Minnetonka | [minnetonkamn.gov](http://minnetonkamn.gov)

14600 Minnetonka Blvd. | Minnetonka, MN 55345

Office: 952-939-8262

## Corrine Heine

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**From:** Greeley, Timothy [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** Monday, June 1, 2020 9:39 AM  
**To:** Corrine Heine  
**Subject:** Ranked choice voting

Greetings. I do not support Ranked Choice Voting and hope that you will use your power to defeat the movement toward it. Thank you.

Tim Greeley  
Teacher for Students that are Blind or Visually Impaired (TBVI)  
Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS)  
Eastern Carver County Schools  
Minnetonka Public Schools



## Corrine Heine

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**From:** Ben Gozola <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 1, 2020 5:43 PM  
**To:** Corrine Heine  
**Subject:** Ranked Choice Voting

Charter Commissioners:

As a former Charter Commission member for the City of Robbinsdale, I know the life of a Charter Commissioner is not always the most glamorous or exciting, but issues like Rank Choice Voting represent your moments to shine. Please, for all that is good and holy, let our voters weigh in on this critical issue and make sure this matter is on the ballot this November!

Thank you for taking quick action to make sure this happens,

Ben Gozola