



CHARTER COMMISSION AGENDA

July 7, 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 June 23, 2020 meeting
4. Discussion: What problem(s) is Minnetonka working to solve with Ranked Choice Voting?
5. Review of charter amendment proposed by city council
6. Future meeting schedule
 - Review overall work plan
7. Adjournment

Attachments:

- a. Draft minutes, June 23, 2020 meeting
- b. City attorney memo re agenda item 4, with attachments
- c. City attorney memo re agenda item 5, with attachment
- 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

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA CHARTER COMMISSION**

June 23, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

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

Members absent: None.

3. APPROVE MINUTES OF JUNE 9, 2020 MEETING

Schneider moved, Anderson seconded, to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2020 meeting as revised. By roll call vote, all voted in favor.

4. PRESENTATIONS AND QUESTIONS – UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES AND OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS ON RANKED CHOICE VOTING

Northrup indicated that the city council had asked for a study of ranked choice voting. The commission has heard from proponents and election officials. The commission's work plan calls for consideration of unintended consequences and opposing viewpoints. He introduced Dr. Fred Van Bennekom, who works in survey design.

Van Bennekom said he is a professional surveyor and trainer on surveys. In his professional work, he never uses ranked choice in surveys, because they are high in respondent annoyance and respondent error.

He noted that there is no perfect election system. The goal is to find the best system, and that is a value question. His criteria are that it should be fair, simple for voters to understand, transparent so that citizens understand the outcome, minimize cost and incentives acceptable electioneering strategies. Proponents of RCV say it is easy, ensures majority support and eliminates spoiler elections, but they don't mention transparency.

Van Bennekom believes that RCV is a get-out-the vote strategy. RCV promotes a proliferation of candidates on a ballot. He described what happened in the Maine 2nd Congressional District election from 2018. Although Poliquin had the most first choice

votes, Golden won in the 2nd round based on second-choice votes from the eliminated candidates. In the 2nd round, 8253 of the 23,427 ballots were disqualified due to overvotes (98), undervotes (7820) and exhausted choices (335). The complexity of the system makes it less transparent.

As to whether the system is simple and easy for the voter, the fact that one-third of the votes in the second round were exhausted suggests otherwise. Of almost 300,000 ballots, over 50,000 ballots had no second choice.

He believes the impact on elections is a move from strategic voting to strategic electioneering. Under a winner-take-all system, candidates would try to push out marginalized candidates. But in an RCV system, parties want to encourage fringe, marginal, and one-issue candidates in the hopes of gaining their second and third-choice votes.

Northrup introduced Marc Francis, a resident who opposes ranked choice voting. Francis has been a resident since 1991. He opposes ranked choice voting, primarily because of ballot exhaustion. Ballots become exhausted due to overvoting, exhausting their choices, or undervoting. His primary concern is undervoting, because those who are most likely to undervote are those with strong opinions, seniors and those who only vote for candidates they have researched. Voters are robbed of their voice when their ballots are eliminated, even though they made a purposeful choice. Voters should not have to place a ranked vote for a candidate that they don't support, nor should they have to worry if their ballot will count.

The Maine Heritage Policy Center found that there is a national ballot exhaustion rate of 10.92%. In California, ballot exhaustion ranged from 9.6% to 27.1%. In Minneapolis in 2017, the rate of ballot exhaustion was 13.4%, using a weighted average. In 2013, it was 17%. In St. Louis Park in 2019, the ballot exhaustion rate was 9.4%. FairVote admits an exhaustion rate of 10%. FairVote provides very little information about exhausted ballots.

Francis suggested that the city should fix what it knows rather than adopt a system that voters don't know or trust. The city could increase turnout by moving to even-year elections. The city needs to educate voters about ballot exhaustion. Finally, if RCV is enacted, it should have a repeal feature built into it. Francis believes that the fact that 10% of the ballots are not counted is reason enough to reject ranked choice voting.

Wiersum asked what caused Francis to become interested in ranked choice voting. Francis said he had seen letters to the editor in the Sun Sailor newspaper regarding ranked choice voting. He started looking into it and moved quickly from curious to skeptical to opposed.

Schneider said he was concerned about the ability of voters to be fully informed when there are numerous candidates. Francis agreed and said there was a study that was done that indicated voters will not rank numerous candidates.

Northrup introduced Carter Glendenning, a Minnetonka resident and a former board member of Minnesota Voters Alliance. Glendenning said that ranked choice voting requires voters to predict who may be eliminated. Voters are not given true choices between competing substitutes.

Seniors have a difficult time remembering instructions on how to vote. In a Cato Unbound study, the study indicated that RCV results in voter decline among African Americans. In odd-year elections, voter turnout declined by 8% on average compared to non-RCV elections. Cato Unbound also determined that voting complication results in an increase in ballot errors. A 2014 study indicated that ballot exhaustion can dilute the vote count so much that the winner does not have a majority of all ballots cast.

Glendenning noted that three cities have repealed RCV: Boulder, CO; Ann Arbor, MI and Cincinnati, OH.

Glendenning stated that there is no data that supports FairVote's contention that RCV saves money by eliminating primaries. He said there is no data to indicate that cities that have adopted RCV have realized cost savings. Glendenning invited the commission to look at who funds FairVote and the push for ranked choice voting, and he indicated that one of the persons funding it is George Soros.

Larson asked what happens if there are four candidates and the voter only votes for one. Van Bennekom said that the voter is only disenfranchised if the candidate loses in one of the early voting rounds.

Anderson asked if ranked choice voting could be used to game the system and whether party politics plays a role in that. She is concerned about keeping Minnetonka elections non-partisan. Van Bennekom said that RCV would not necessarily introduce partisanship, but part of the election strategy is to try to get a lot of similar-thinking candidates into the race and then instruct voters about using second choices. Francis said that a strategy can be to load up candidates with similar views.

Sodergren asked how an exhausted ballot is different than voting for a losing candidate in a primary. Francis said that in a primary, the vote counts, but in ranked choice voting, the system eliminates the vote. Wiersum said that if your candidate is eliminated in the primary, the voter gets to vote again in the general election. But in ranked choice voting,

if your candidate is eliminated in a preliminary round, the voter does not have the ability to vote again.

Schneider's main concern is that voters need to have the chance to be an educated voter. He noted that voters whose candidates lose in a primary have an opportunity to become more educated about the candidates in the general election.

Northrup thanked the speakers for their participation.

5. DISCUSSION REGARDING RESIDENT OUTREACH

Kari Knoll, communications manager, introduced herself and gave an overview of the communications staff and their duties. The communications staff has been looking at the project in four phases: making sure the residents knew about the ordinance the council was considering; informing residents about the commission's study. The staff will use all communications means to inform residents. The July *Minnetonka Memo* will include a front page article to let residents know about the July 14 public comment meeting. The city has almost 24,000 people who subscribe to city notices. The city will use social media, including Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor and Instagram. Those media forms reach a wide demographic of residents in the city. Staff will also make sure the Sun Sailor is aware of what is going on.

In addition, every year the city does a community survey. The city included a question about ranked choice voting in the survey and expects to have those results soon.

Sodergren asked how much the social media accounts are used. Knoll said the city launched the email system four years ago. The city has had a much higher rate of engagement than cities typically see, typically 40 to 50 percent. The social media accounts are also tracked, but the number of comments and shares depend upon the content.

Schneider said he was glad to hear that the survey included a question and looked forward to seeing the results. He also said he wanted to hear from the senior population as to whether they had concerns about the voting method. Knoll said the communications plan is designed to make sure residents know about the work that is being done and know how to reach the commission with feedback. Northrup said he would like to know how voters educate themselves about candidates and how ranked choice voting would change that. Knoll indicated that, if ranked choice voting is adopted, there will be a great amount of work that would be needed to educate voters.

Anderson asked what company did the community survey. Knoll responded that Decision Resources conducted the survey.

Allendorf said that people ask him what ranked choice voting is and why is the city looking at it. Allendorf said he would be concerned that in responding to a survey question, he would be concerned if people knew what ranked choice voting means.

Tolliver said her main concern is the senior population, and they are not as likely to participate in social media and emails. Seniors are also concerned about attending public meetings, and she does not know how they will get the information.

Wiersum said the city has a lot of data that the city gets from media. He wondered if there was a way to make sure the communications were evenhanded across the various demographical populations within the city. Knoll said that is the basic strategy the city uses on all major initiatives, to make sure the city is communicating with everyone. She is confident that the communications strategy is the best way to reach residents. Wiersum said it would be interesting to see how many people follow each of the different media.

Northrup asked how the July 14 meeting might reach residents. Knoll said the communications plan would be to let residents know what the commission is considering and why resident feedback is needed.

Schneider expressed concern about having an effective communications plan to educate voters that the issue would be on the ballot, especially because many people are likely to vote early by absentee ballot. Knoll acknowledged that it was a relative short time period, but the city has been effective in reaching people quickly. The staff is already thinking about getting the information in the *Minnetonka Memo*, and a separate mailing is also possible.

Allendorf said that how the question is framed for the ballot is important. It is incumbent on the city to provide voters with enough pros and cons in order to educate the voters about what they are voting on.

Cheleen said that if the issue goes on the ballot, information should be provided in a mailing to every household. Heine noted that the city council would determine the communications plan, if the issue is put on the ballot.

Sodergren asked if election judges could be used to assist in getting out information and whether the city might partner with FairVote to get information out. She also wondered when a charter amendment was last submitted to the voters. Heine said that the city could not partner with FairVote because public funds cannot be spent to promote or

oppose a ballot measure. The city must be neutral. Heine said the last charter amendment that went on the ballot was in 1991, related to the mayor's term.

Schneider confirmed that the last charter amendment that went to the voters took nearly two years before it went to the voters. Anderson said the issue was controversial but that the city had done a good job of being neutral and pointing out pros and cons. Wiersum said the city does a good job of being neutral in communicating to residents.

6. FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

Northrup asked whether there was any additional information on legislative updates. Heine indicated that there was nothing in addition to what David Maeda had reported at the June 9 meeting.

Northrup said that for July 7, the commission would discuss what problem needs to be solved and the ordinance, and July 14 would be a public comment meeting.

Schneider said it would be important to get more detailed cost information. He also would like to look at scholarly, credible information as opposed to opinion pieces. He would like to see summaries of the various articles. Anderson said she would also be interested in articles of that type, but not opinion pieces that are clearly biased.

Allendorf said he would like to talk about the July 14 meeting. He would like to get input from the residents but without a lot of repetition and long presentations. Wiersum said that the city has asked speakers to limit their presentations to three minutes, and it worked fairly well.

Anderson questioned why the commission would be considering the wording of the ordinance. Heine responded that the state law contemplates that the commission might propose changes in the wording of the charter amendment. Anderson also said that it would be important for the commission to consider whether ranked choice voting addresses the problem of low voter turnout. She noted that Minneapolis had seen a 40 percent turnout in 2017 but that was an election where turnouts were greater across the country. In addition, there were 35 people who ran for mayor at that election. She would like to see unbiased information about whether RCV increases voter turnout.

Cheleen asked about when the city would have information about costs. Northrup indicated that staff is working on that information.

The agenda for the July 21 meeting would be to start working on the report, and July 28 would be to finalize the report.

Schneider said that the commission could have preliminary discussion about the ordinance on July 7, but he would not want to vote on any changes until after the July 14 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Anderson moved, Allendorf seconded, to adjourn the meeting. By roll call voted, all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

LuAnn Tolliver
Secretary

To: Minnetonka Charter Commission
From: Corrine Heine, City Attorney
Date: June 30, 2020
Subject: Meeting of July 7, 2020, Agenda Item 4

4. Discussion: What problem(s) is Minnetonka working to solve with Ranked Choice Voting?

At its June 23, 2020 meeting, the commission expressed an interest in discussing the question “What problems are we trying to solve?” Staff suggests that a framework for that discussion would be to start with the problems that FairVote Minnetonka has identified as being addressed by RCV and to follow that with two questions: (1) Is that a problem in Minnetonka local elections?; and, (2) Is there evidence that RCV reduces or eliminates the identified problem? In addition, FairVote has identified benefits of RCV, such as increased civility in campaigning. Those issues can be re-configured as problems, and the same two questions can be asked with respect to those issues.

Problems that RCV is intended to address

The materials provided by FairVote Minnetonka for the Jan. 28, 2020 charter commission meeting identified the following problems that implementation of RCV would address:

- Low voter turnout for local elections. (FairVote: implementation of RCV would increase voter participation in local elections.)
- Insufficient numbers of candidates. (FairVote: elimination of the primary will make it more likely that more candidates will run.)
- Non-majority winners for special elections that have no primary. (FairVote: RCV will ensure that the winner of a special election will have majority support.)
- Costly primaries. (FairVote: RCV saves taxpayers and candidates the cost of a primary election.)

In addition, FairVote has identified benefits of RCV, which have been re-configured as problems below:

- Lack of civility in campaigning. (FairVote: RCV encourages candidates to be civil in order to appeal to voters beyond core followers.)

Each of those problems is addressed below. The staff has identified information that relates to each of the questions presented, for the commission to consider. In many instances, references are made to information provided in previous meeting packets, and hyperlinks to those packets are provided for the commission's convenience. Reference is also made to new materials that were requested by the commission and are attached to this memo. Those materials include:

- Summaries of academic articles. The city attorney has reviewed and summarized several articles. Limited time and resources did not permit an exhaustive review of all articles on the subject of RCV – full copies of some articles were not available and many must be purchased. The city attorney did purchase the right to access several articles, and she also invited residents who favor and oppose RCV (David Haeg and Marc Francis) to share any academic articles that they had available to them. As of the writing of this memo, neither resident has provided any articles. Attached to this memo are summaries of the articles that the city attorney reviewed, arranged in chronological order based on publication date.
- As requested by the commission, Moranda Dammann has provided a memorandum with additional information on the costs of implementing RCV. The memorandum also includes historical information on numbers of candidates in city elections.
- Elections staff has asked Hennepin County to provide information regarding the age of registered voters in the city, which will be provided in an addendum when it is received. Elections records do not contain data on income or race, so the elections staff compiled citywide data on income, race and age distribution, taken from the draft 2040 comprehensive guide plan. That information is attached.

Low voter turnout for local elections

Is this a problem in Minnetonka local elections?

See pages 161 to 162 of the [Mar. 17, 2020 packet](#), for report by Moranda Dammann on turnout for general and special municipal elections in the last 20 years.

Is there evidence that RCV reduces or eliminates this problem?

See Jan. 28, 2020 meeting minutes, at page 9 of [May 26, 2020 packet](#). Prof. David Schultz said there is some evidence that RCV increases voter turnout and some that it does not.

See page 17 of this packet – in a 2016 study of California cities (Henry), there was no drastic change in voter turnout among cities that adopted RCV (all cities held their elections in even-numbered years).

See page 18 of this packet – in a 2016 study of U.S. cities (Kimball/Anthony), including Minneapolis, there was no statistically significant change in turnout for November elections. RCV elections did generate higher voter turnout as compared to the primary or runoff elections that they replaced. RCV substantially reduces the drop-off votes between the first and last rounds of an election, but voter participation seems to be influenced more by the stimulus of a competitive race than by adoption of RCV.

See page 25 of this packet – in a 2019 study of California cities (Hellekant), RCV had no significant impact on voter turnout (all cities held their elections in even-numbered years).

See pages 12 to 13 of [June 9, 2020 addendum no. 1](#) – information regarding voter turnout in Minnesota RCV cities

See June 9, 2020 meeting minutes, at page 3 of the [June 23, 2020 packet](#). Minneapolis City Clerk Casey Car reported that Minneapolis had seen an increase in voter turnout, with 40 percent turnout for the 2017 municipal election.

See pages 20 and 59 of [Mar. 17, 2020 packet](#) – Minneapolis had 45,968 voters in 2009, 80,099 in 2013, and 105,000 voters in 2019 (42.45%).

Insufficient numbers of candidates

Is this a problem in Minnetonka local elections?

See pages 6-7 of [June 9, 2020 addendum no. 1](#) – information on local races where candidate ran unopposed

See pages 30 and 31 of this packet – historical information on numbers of candidates that have run in city elections, including withdrawals

See pages 161 to 162 of the [Mar. 17, 2020 packet](#), for report by Moranda Dammann on turnout for general and special municipal elections in the last 20 years.

Is there evidence that RCV reduces or eliminates this problem?

See page 18 of this packet – in a 2016 study (Kimball/Anthony), the authors noted that RCV seemed to have encouraged more candidates to run for Minneapolis city council.

See Jan. 9, 2020 minutes, at pages 3 to 4 of the [June 23, 2020 packet](#) – Minneapolis City Clerk Carl reported that Minneapolis has seen an increase in diversity of its candidates since adopting RCV

See pages 9 to 11 of [June 9, 2020 addendum no. 1](#) – information related to numbers of candidates in Minnesota RCV city elections

Non-majority winners for special elections with no primary

Is this a problem in Minnetonka local elections?

See pages 161 to 162 of the [Mar. 17, 2020 packet](#), for report by Moranda Dammann on turnout for general and special municipal elections in the last 20 years.

Is there evidence that RCV reduces or eliminates this problem?

RCV eliminates primaries. Opponents cite ballot exhaustion as a comparable problem in RCV elections. For information on ballot exhaustion, see:

See page 14 of this packet – authors of a 2011 study (Cook/Latterman) reported that the rate of exhausted ballots in 2011 San Francisco local races ranged from 0.0% to 22.5%

See page 16 of this packet – in a 2015 study, authors (Burnett/Kogan) reported rates of ballot exhaustion ranging from 9.6% to 22.5% in ranked choice elections in four U.S. cities and counties.

See pages 16 and 22 of this packet – a 2015 study (Burnett/Kogan) and a 2017 study (Nielsen) and supported findings from other studies, that ballot exhaustion increases as the number of candidates on an RCV ballot increases.

See page 18 of this packet – in a 2016 study (Kimball/Anthony) of U.S. cities, including Minneapolis, RCV substantially reduces the drop-off votes between the first and last rounds of an election, but voter participation seems to be influenced more by the stimulus of a competitive race than by adoption of RCV.

See Jan. 1, 2018 minutes, at page 8 of [May 26, 2020 packet](#) – according to FairVote, the rate of exhaustion will increase as the number of candidates increases.

See page 33 of [June 23, 2020 addendum](#) – rate of ballot exhaustion in 2017 Minneapolis race ranged from 3.7% to 21.8%.

Costly primaries

Is this a problem in Minnetonka local elections?

See pages 165 to 166 of the [Mar. 17, 2020 packet](#), for report by Moranda Dammann on costs for primaries and general elections.

Is there evidence that RCV reduces or eliminates this problem?

See pages 3 to 5 of [June 9, 2020 addendum no. 1](#) – information related to estimated costs

See pages 98 to 124 of [June 23, 2020 packet](#) – study did not find a statistically significant increase or decrease in elections costs related to the adoption of RCV

See pages 27 to 35 of this packet –memo from Moranda Dammann on projected costs, with attachments

Incivility in campaigning

Is this a problem in Minnetonka local elections?

Staff has no information on this issue. The commission will need to make an independent assessment, based on personal knowledge.

Is there evidence that RCV reduces or eliminates this problem?

See pages 20 and 21 of this packet – according to articles written in 2016 (Donovan/Tolbert/Gracey) and 2017 (John/Douglas), voters and candidates in RCV cities perceive less negative campaigning than those in comparable non-RCV cities

SUMMARIES OF ACADEMIC ARTICLES

“Ranked Choice Voting in the 2011 San Francisco Municipal Election: Final Report,” McCarthy Center Faculty Publications, Paper 2 (2011)

Authors: Corey Cook and David Latterman

Purpose: The purpose off the report was to analyze voters’ usage of the ballot in the 2011 SanFrancisco municipal election and the tendencies to overvote, undervote, and rank candidates for three citywide offices.

Methodology: The authors used final ballot image data published by the department of elections to identify overvotes, undervotes and exhausted ballots. Looking at the actual voter registration lists, the authors were able to obtain age and party identification of individual voters. They inferred gender based upon voter names and inferred probable race based upon name and zip code demography.

Results:

1. The vast majority of voters did not cast any overvotes. Overall, only 1.1 percent had their ballots invalidated by overvoting (ranking two candidates at the same level). However one precinct had an overvote rate of 9.3 percent, and of the 12 precincts with the highest rates of overvotes, 7 of them were located in the Western Addition/Japantown area. The statistical analysis showed higher overvote rates in precincts with higher proportions of Asian and Pacific Islander voters, Latino voters, and voters over 60.
2. The authors defined “undervoting” as choosing to skip a given contest – for example, voting in the mayoral race but not voting in the district attorney or sheriff’s race. Undervoting was generally uncommon, but more likely in precincts with higher numbers of Asian and Pacific Islander voters and less likely in precincts with higher numbers of African American voters. [Based on this definition of undervoting, undervoting could also occur with a traditional first-past-the-post ballot. The authors do not perform any analysis that would identify the rates of undervoting as a ranked-choice-voting phenomenon.]
3. Most voters effectively utilized the option to rank more than one candidate on their ballot. The percentage of voters who ranked three candidates was 72.5% in the mayoral election 51.8% in the district attorney election, and 41.9% in the sheriff’s election.
4. The percentage of voters who ranked only one candidate was 20.4% in the mayoral election 26.1% in the district attorney election, and 37.9% in the sheriff’s election. This was more common in precincts with higher proportions of Asian and Pacific Islanders, Latino and older voters and less common in progressive precincts, those with higher proportions of African American voters, and absentee voters.
5. The rate of exhausted ballots, where a voter used all three rankings but the ballot was exhausted, was 22.5% in the mayor race, 2.6% in the district attorney race, and 0.0% in the sheriff’s race.
6. The authors indicated that it was not possible to reach definitive conclusions and that more research was necessary.

7. [The article does not mention the number of candidates running in each race, but there were 16 mayoral candidates, 5 district attorney candidates and 4 sheriff's candidates. In all three races, the candidate with the highest number of first-choice votes in the first round won the election.]

“Ballot (and voter) ‘exhaustion’ under Instant Runoff Voting: An examination of four ranked-choice elections,” *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (2015)

Authors: Craig M. Burnett, Vladimir Kogan

Purpose: The authors reviewed rates of ballot exhaustion and outcomes in four ranked-choice elections.

Methodology: The authors studied the 2010 mayoral races in San Leandro and Oakland, CA, the county executive race in Pierce County, WA in 2008, and the mayoral race in San Francisco in 2011. All four races used the same ballot design, and digital images of the cast ballots were available, enabling analysis of individual voter behavior. The authors noted that in all but San Francisco, the election was the first use of RCV by that city or county.

Results:

1. In all four elections, the winning candidate had less than a majority of *all* valid ballots that were cast. Winners captured a range of 43.4% to 45.7% of all valid ballots.
2. The overall rate of ballot exhaustion was 9.6% for San Leandro (3 candidates running) 10.2% for Pierce County, 11.6% (4 candidates) for Oakland (4 candidates) and 27.1% for San Francisco (16 candidates). The data indicated that as the number of candidates increases, the rate of ballot exhaustion increases.
3. The rate of voters who cast complete ballots (ranking all three choices) ranged from 51.2% in Pierce County to 73.0% in San Francisco. Overall, voters who ranked all three choices had the lowest probability of having their ballots exhausted: 0.0% in Pierce County, 2.7% in San Leandro, 7.8% in Oakland and 22.5% in San Francisco. The rate of exhaustion for voters who identified only one candidate range from 27.9% to 44.8%.
4. The authors noted that a substantial number of voters did not rank multiple candidates even when they had the opportunity to do so. Substantial educational efforts regarding the mechanics of RCV might help alleviate that concern and should be part of any transition plan for cities that adopt RCV.

“The Implementation and Effects of Ranked Choice Voting in California Cities,” Thesis presented to Department of Public Policy and Administration, California State University, Sacramento (2016)

Author: Madeline Alys Henry

Purpose: The thesis sought to determine the motivations behind RCV, what makes a city more likely to enact it, and how it has been implemented.

Methodology: The author conducted case studies from four cities in California that adopted RCV (San Francisco, Berkeley, Oakland, San Leandro) and one city that did not implement RCV (Davis). The author interviewed two city officials each from Berkeley, Oakland, San Leandro and Davis, reviewed newspapers and publicly available documents, and reviewed a number of studies related to San Francisco RCV.

Results:

1. The interviewed cities that had implemented RCV expressed similar motivations for adopting RCV. The most emphasized motive was to avoid runoff elections, and the cost savings from that change. They also hoped to increase voter turnout by holding their election in November. Officials also hoped it would make voters feel more enfranchised because their vote would count even if their first choice lost. Some also hoped it would ease negative campaigning.
2. The author reported several impacts from RCV in the interviewed cities. RCV eliminated the need for runoff races in 17 seats over three election cycles. Some cities reported controversy in the initial RCV elections, if the winner of the election was not the person who had the most first choice votes in the first round of voting, although that became less controversial with continued use of RCV. The cities did not see a drastic change in voter turnout (all cities held municipal elections in even-numbered years, when state and congressional seats would also be on the ballot). Officials reported that it was harder to predict RCV election outcomes. Some cities reported that candidates had started to work together and tell voters whom to put second and third; this is especially true when there is a high number of candidates.
3. In the city that did not implement RCV (Davis), 55% of the population had passed an advisory measure urging the council to implement RCV. However, the city could not adopt RCV unless it became a charter city, and the city did not adopt a charter.
4. All of the cities shared similar traits. The author postulated that highly educated, progressive and innovative cities are more likely to consider RCV electoral reform.

“Voter Participation with Ranked Choice Voting in the United States,” University of Missouri-St. Louis (2016)

Authors: David C. Kimball, Joseph Anthony

Purpose: The study examined the degree to which voters turn out and properly cast their votes, comparing RCV to plurality voting.

Methodology: The authors used a difference-in-differences research design to compare cities that use RCV to those using plurality voting. The cities in the control (plurality) group were similar to the treatment (RCV) group in terms of population, region, income, poverty and demographic diversity. (Minneapolis was matched to Boston, Cincinnati, Tulsa, and Seattle. St. Paul was matched to Cedar Rapids, IA, Des Moines, Madison, and Spokane.) The other RCV cities were Cambridge, MA, Berkeley, Oakland, San Leandro and San Francisco in CA, and Portland, ME.) Data on voter participation was gathered in both the control and treatment groups of cities from elections held before and after the adoption of RCV by the treatment group. Elections in a presidential cycle were omitted under the theory that voter participation is affected by the presidential cycle and not reflective of turnout for local elections.

Results:

1. Cities with RCV averaged a higher rate of turnout than the control group for elections that occurred before the adoption of RCV – indicating that cities that adopt RCV are more progressive and generally experience higher turnout. In elections before the adoption of RCV, the treatment cities averaged 40.1% turnout as compared to 29.3% in the plurality cities (an 11-point difference). In elections after the adoption of RCV, the turnout in RCV cities was 34.1% compared to 28.4% (a 6-point difference), suggesting that RCV reduces general election turnout.
2. When the authors used controls to account for other factors that could influence voter turnout (more contests on the ballot, more competitive campaigns, elections held in conjunction with state and federal contests), the results suggested that RCV is not associated with a statistically significant change in turnout for November elections. The results indicated, however, that turnout averages 9 points higher when there are more than three contests on the ballot (such as statewide races) and 10 points higher in even-numbered years.
3. RCV elections did generate higher voter turnout as compared to the primary or runoff elections that they replaced.
4. The study also compared the residual vote rate between RCV and plurality cities. The residual vote rate is the difference between the total votes cast and the number of valid votes recorded for a contest. That difference reflects both ballots that were rejected as invalid and undervotes, where the voter did not cast a vote for that contest. Before adoption of RCV, RCV cities had a marginally lower residual vote rate than the control group. After the adoption of RCV, the RCV cities had a lower residual vote rate than the control group, indicating that there was a lower rate of voter error and non-votes in the RCV cities. When the results were adjusted

for other factors (like competitive races), the adoption of RCV did not appear to be associated in a noticeable change in residual vote rate.

5. The study also looked at voter “drop-off.” In an RCV election, voter drop-off is the difference between the total ballots cast in the election and the number of valid votes counted in the final round of RCV tabulation. The votes that drop off would include non-votes, overvotes and exhausted ballots. For plurality cities, the study computed the number of people who vote in the general election but did not vote in the primary or run-off election. The study showed a high rate of drop-off in plurality cities, with the primary or run-off votes being roughly half the number of votes cast in the general election. For RCV voters, the drop-off rate before implementing RCV was 50.3% but after implementing RCV was only 13.1%. In that context, RCV substantially reduces the drop off votes between the first and last rounds of an election. However, the study concluded that overall, voter participation seems to be influenced more by the stimulus of a competitive local or statewide campaign than by the adoption of RCV rules.

6. The authors also examined Minneapolis elections for evidence of socioeconomic biases in voter participation. Citing a 2013 study, the authors confirmed that in the 2013 Minneapolis election, voter turnout was considerably higher in the three wealthiest wards than in the three least affluent wards. In this study, the authors performed a comparison with the turnout in 2005, before the adoption of RCV, to see whether RCV impacted the disparity in turnout. The overall voter turnout was 3% higher after implementation of RCV. There was no difference in the relative turnout between high-income and low-income wards in the mayoral election; however, the drop off rate declined in minority wards in the 2013 city council contests, especially in wards with more candidates running for a seat. The authors concluded that overall, the Minneapolis evidence indicates that socioeconomic disparities in voter participation are similar in plurality and RCV elections.

7. With respect to spoiled ballots, the authors noted that a higher rate of spoiled ballots in low income wards than in high income wards; however, voters are able to correct spoiled ballots. Spoiled ballots can be an indication of voter confusion. The spoiled ballot rate increased from 1% in 2005 to 4% in 2013, with the rate increase being only slightly higher in low income wards than high income wards. Data on undervotes and overvotes did not reveal substantial income disparities.

8. The authors noted that RCV seems to have encouraged more candidates to run for city council. The number of council candidates increased from 25 in 2005 to 47 in 2013, for all 13 wards. In 2005, no ward featured a campaign with more than two candidates, but in 2013, 10 of the 13 wards had more than two candidates.

“Campaign civility under preferential and plurality voting,” *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 42 (2016)

Authors: Todd Donovan, Caroline Tolbert, Kellen Gracey

Staff note: This article is frequently cited on the issue of the impact of RCV on campaign civility. However, the city staff was unable to obtain a copy for review. The authors’ abstract is provided below. Staff believes that the authors used some of the same research data that is referenced on the following page in the article on “Campaign Civility and Voter Engagement” by John and Douglas.

Abstract:

Abstract

We present reasons to expect that campaigns are less negative under preferential voting. We then examine if preferential voting systems affect how people perceive the conduct of elections. This paper reports results from surveys designed to measure voters’ perceptions of candidates’ campaigns, comparing places with plurality elections to those that used preferential voting rules. Our surveys of voters indicate that people in cities using preferential voting were significantly more satisfied with the conduct of local campaigns than people in similar cities with plurality elections. People in cities with preferential voting were also less likely to view campaigns as negative, and less likely to respond that candidates were frequently criticizing each other. Results are consistent across a series of robustness checks.

“Candidate Civility and Voter Engagement in Seven Cities with Ranked Choice Voting,” National Civil Review (Spring 2017)

Authors: Sarah John and Andrew Douglas (the authors are researchers with FairVote)

Purpose: The authors reported on the results of two surveys conducted by the Eagleton Poll at Rutgers University in November 2013 and November 2014. The surveys were part of a larger project funded by the Democracy Fund.

Methodology: Each poll surveyed a random sample of more than 2,400 likely voters. Surveys were conducted in English and Spanish and on cell and landline telephones. In the November 2013 poll, half of the survey respondents were from RCV cities (Minneapolis, St. Paul and Cambridge, MA) and half were from seven non-RCV control cities with similar demographics. In November 2014, the survey respondents were from four RCV cities in California (Berkeley, Oakland, San Francisco, and San Leandro) and seven control cities in California with similar demographics.

Results:

1. In the 2013 poll, only 5% of RCV respondents reported that candidates criticized each other a great deal of the time compared to 25% in non-RCV cities. In the 2014 poll (all California cities), the numbers were 28% for RCV respondents and 36% for non-RCV cities. Respondents in RCV cities were more likely to report campaigns as being less negative than those in non-RCV cities. The same was true of candidates, based on a separate survey performed by academic researchers from the University of Iowa and Western Washington University. The numbers of respondents who reported that campaigns were *more* negative were 4% for RCV versus 14% for non-RCV in 2013 and 17% for RCV versus 23% for non-RCV in 2014.
2. In the 2013 survey, 90% of RCV respondents reported that the ballot was easy to understand, and in 2014 it was 89%.
3. In 2013, 62% of RCV respondents favored use of RCV in local elections and 49% of non-RCV respondents supported introduction of RCV in their cities. In 2014, the numbers were 57% and 54%.

STAFF NOTE: This article was written by two researchers for FairVote, a proponent of RCV.

It has been included because it appears to summarize information from survey data and other research that would have been addressed in the Donovan, Tolbert, and Gracey article that is abstracted on the preceding page. Because that article was not available, and this article provided a description of the survey and results, staff has included this summary for the commission.

“Ranked Choice Voting and Attitudes toward Democracy in the United States: Results from a Survey Experiment,” *Politics & Policy* (Aug. 2017)

Author: Lindsey, Nielsen, Bucknell University

Purpose: The purpose of the research was to test three premises: (1) whether voters follow RCV election rules; (2) whether RCV will elect a different candidate than plurality rules; and (3) whether voters’ attitudes about elections and democracy will be impacted by voting under RCV rules.

Methodology: The author conducted an online survey over a four-day period in 2015. The survey was open to adults over the age of 18 residing in the United States, and 622 people participated. Survey participants were paid \$.60 for their participation. Survey respondents were randomly assigned to either a plurality-voting group (308 people) or an RCV-voting group (314 people). They were given a list of 14 people (both Republicans and Democrats) who were known or likely candidates for the 2016 presidential race and asked to vote. Those in the RCV group were they should rank as many candidates as they wished to rank, but not to give the same ranking to more than one person and not to skip numbers in ranking. The author noted that the average participants were younger, more educated and more comfortable with computers than other demographics of the U.S. population.

Results:

1. The group of RCV voters followed the rules closely. Four ballots (1.3%) were rejected for skipping rankings; no one gave more than one candidate the same ranking. The author speculated that the high rate of compliance might have been affected by the respondents’ familiarity with computers, since it was an online study.
2. The same candidate won the election in both the plurality and the RCV election simulations. In the plurality election, that candidate had 40% of the votes. In the RCV election, that candidate had a similar percentage of first-choice votes and ultimately won after eight rounds of voting.
3. The author found “underwhelming” support for RCV among survey respondents. Those who participated in the RCV election were no more likely than the plurality voters to think that the elections rules produced a fairer outcome. Only 11 percent of RCV voters preferred RCV rules. The vast majority of survey respondents in both groups preferred plurality or majority elections because they believed they resulted in the fairest election outcomes.

Other: The author made several observations related to RCV but that were not part of the objects of the study.

1. The author cited several advantages of RCV, based on other studies, including: winners are more likely to have broad appeal and be more ideologically moderate; RCV encourages a personal vote because candidates must distinguish themselves from other candidates on a basis other than a party label; it can encourage “sincere” votes because voters aren’t concerned about “wasting” a vote on a candidate with no chance of winning; and the ability to express support for multiple candidates may lead to more satisfied voters.
2. The author indicated there is debate over whether RCV alleviates ethnic conflict in highly divided societies, citing studies that reach opposite conclusions.

2. The author noted that 65 percent of the RCV candidates ranked three candidates or less; only 13 percent ranked all 14 candidates. The ballot exhaustion rate in the RCV election was 13 percent. The author indicated that rate of exhaustion supported findings from other studies, that ballot exhaustion increases as the number of candidates on an RCV ballot increase. (The fact that the ballot exhaustion rate is the same as the percentage of people who ranked all 14 candidates is coincidental – there is no relationship between the two numbers.)

3. The author noted that 20-25 percent of the RCV respondents who identified themselves with a political party crossed party lines in ranking their top four candidates. That fact supports findings from other studies that RCV encourages voters to cast “sincere” votes, i.e., to vote for the candidates whose policy positions are closest to one’s one, rather than voting on the most likely to win.

4. Citing various studies, the author noted problems with RCV: surveys show mixed results on whether voters understand the rules of RCV elections; RCV may not result in a winner with a majority of all votes cast; evidence from Minneapolis and San Francisco indicates that RCV does not reduce the costs of administering elections; lack of transparency to voters in the way that the winner is determined; delays in announcing election results.

“Electoral Rules and Voter Turnout in Mayoral Elections: An Analysis of Ranked Choice voting,” paper prepared for presentation at the Election Systems, Reform and Administration Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 11-12, 2019

Author: Jason A. McDaniel

Purpose: The purpose of the paper was to test the author’s hypotheses that the added complexity of RCV would increase information costs for voters, leading to lower levels of voter turnout.

Methodology: The author studied data from 56 mayoral elections, both before and after the adoption of RCV in seven cities: San Francisco, CA; Minneapolis, MN; Oakland, CA; San Leandro, CA; Saint Paul, MN; Berkeley, CA; and Sante Fe, NM. The author calculated the voter turnout rate by comparing the number of ballots cast to the estimated number of eligible voters, not registered voters – because not all eligible voters register to vote. The author used U.S. Census data to estimate the number of eligible voters. He applied a difference-in-difference research design, using the seven RCV cities as the “treatment” group and election data from a variety of other cities as the “control” group.

Results:

1. The data showed that, for each RCV city, the city experienced its lowest voter turnout in the first election using RCV, but voter participation increased after the first election, returning to or exceeding pre-RCV turnout.
2. The study used the difference-in-difference design as a means of determining the impact that RCV had on voter turnout, as compared to non-RCV cities. The results indicated a decrease in voter turnout of 3-5% on average in RCV cities. The effect of RCV varies based on the election timing cycle used by the cities: cities with elections in even-year cycles showed a decrease in turnout of 2-3%; cities with election is odd-year cycles showed a decrease in turnout of 7% (HOWEVER, there was no significant effect for Minneapolis and St. Paul)(some of the odd-year cities hold their elections in months other than November). The author posited that the difference in results for odd-year election cities could be related to factors not included in the research analysis, such as the quality of election administration. If that were so, it would suggest that the negative impact of RCV on voter participation might be alleviated by high quality election administration.
3. The results suggested that RCV had no significant impact on competitive races, but that as races were less competitive, RCV had negative impacts on voter turnout, ranging from 3% in average competitiveness levels to 10 points in the most uncompetitive races.
4. The results indicated that RCV has no significant effect on turnout when an incumbent is running for election but that when no incumbent is running, turnout in RCV cities decreases by approximately 4%. The results supported the author’s theory that the increased complexity of ranking candidates in RCV reduces voter turnout over what would occur in a plurality system.

“Ranked Choice Voting in Alameda County: A Natural Experiment,” Uppsala university (2019)

Author: Bo Hellekant

Purpose: The paper, a bachelor’s thesis, examines whether implementation of RCV resulted in increased voter turnout in three cities in Alameda County California (Oakland, Berkeley and San Leandro).

Methodology: The author compared turnout in three Alameda County cities with RCV versus eight cities in the same county without RCV over the time period of November 2000 to November 2018 . The communities are located within the same county and have similar rules governing election processes (e.g., when polls are open, voter eligibility, voter registration, absentee voting, campaign finance rules, etc.). Because of the lack of difference in their electoral systems as well as their regional and cultural proximity, the author determined the cities provided an ideal scenario for employing a Difference in Difference methodology. The author examined only citywide (mayoral) elections that occurred at the same time as federal elections because (1) demographic data was not available for individual council districts; and (2) voter turnout for cities with off-cycle elections was significantly lower than those held at the same time as the federal elections cycle, so that those elections were not comparable.

Results:

1. The author was unable to find that implementation of RCV had any significant impact on voter turnout in Alameda county.
2. The author determined that the dataset of elections was too small to allow a more meaningful analysis of the impact of RCV. He noted that the effect of presidential election cycle could supersede other turnout factors, but removing elections that occurred during the presidential election cycle would have further restricted an already small dataset.

“Self-Reported Understanding of Ranked-Choice Voting,” *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 100, No. 5 (Aug. 2019)

Authors: Todd Donovan, Western Washington University; Caroline Tolbert, University of Iowa; Kellen Gracey, DeSales University

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to determine whether certain voter groups find ranked choice voting more difficult to understand than plurality voting.

Methodology: The authors conducted post-election surveys of voters in four California jurisdictions that used RCV for local elections and also conducted surveys in similar California jurisdictions that used plurality voting.

Results:

1. The results of the study indicated that, while 93 percent of voters in plurality cities found the voting instructions "easy" to understand, the corresponding percentage in RCV cities was somewhat less, 88 percent. The data suggested that the difference in understandability was attributable to the RCV form of voting and not to the ability of survey participants to understand voting systems generally.
2. The study looked for any disparity among racial groups in their ability to understand RCV voting instructions, and it found no difference – all racial groups reported the same level of ability to understand the instructions. The study found one sign of potential bias associated with RCV – older people in RCV cities were less likely to report understanding voting instructions and less likely to report understanding RCV elections.
3. The study found a correlation between education and voter understanding, which suggests that voter education campaigns could play a role in increasing understanding of RCV and reducing voting errors.
4. The authors noted that, because they could not obtain access to ballots cast, it was possible that people who self-reported that they understood instructions may have actually made errors on their ballots; further research is needed to determine if the propensity to make a voting error but then erroneously report having understood the voting rules is concentrated among racial or ethnic minorities.



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TO: Corrine Heine, City Attorney
FROM: Moranda Dammann, Administration Manager
DATE: June 30, 2020
SUBJECT: Supplemental information for charter commission

This memo and its attachments provides supplemental information for the charter commission.

Numbers of candidates in municipal elections

The first attachment contains information about the number of candidates that have run in each local race within the last 20 years, including the number of individuals who withdrew from the race.

Financial Impact Information Refined – cost of primaries, launch expenses, ongoing operations.

The second attachment, consisting of four pages, provides a comparison of estimated costs for RCV elections and non-RCV elections, over a nine-year period that includes the next five municipal election cycles.

The first page provides a summary of the differences in costs. Because it is not possible to predict when a primary might occur, the city budgets for primaries in all four wards for every municipal election. Cost comparisons are provided for the primary-and-general-election scenario and the general-election-only scenario.

The second page identifies actual costs incurred for elections in one ward and citywide, as well as the budget for 2020. The estimated costs on the third and fourth pages were based on the actual costs shown on this page. The budget for 2020 is included as a reminder that the city incurs election costs every year because of state and federal elections. If municipal elections were shifted to even-numbered years, it would result in a savings of all odd-year costs. School districts would be required to pay for school elections that occur in odd years.

The third page provides the multi-year estimate for RCV elections, and the fourth page provides the multi-year estimate for non-RCV elections. These estimates assume the following additional costs associated with RCV elections that would not occur under the current election system:

Launch expenses: A line item is added for creation and distribution of materials and efforts for outreach and education. For RCV to be successful, extensive voter outreach and education is necessary. As part of voter education, and in collaboration with Hennepin County, staff would hold mock elections throughout the transition period to provide voters the opportunity to practice the process. Education outreach could include mailings, publications, social media pushes and website articles, as well as community events and information sessions. The estimated initial

cost is \$25,000 in 2021. It is assumed that educational efforts would ramp down in successive election cycles, as voters become accustomed to the new voting method.

Training costs: The city currently conducts election judge training in only even-numbered years. If RCV is adopted, additional training on the RCV voting method would be needed in odd-numbered years.

Staffing: Staff anticipates that additional staffing would be needed on an ongoing basis if RCV is adopted. Because RCV would be used only for municipal elections in odd-numbered years, voters would use different voting systems from year to year. Until RCV is adopted and the city council provides direction on its preferred implementation plan, staff cannot precisely determine the additional staffing needs. Staff anticipates that this position would spend significant time educating voters on odd and even year voting processes. This staff person would take the lead on the tabulation and audit of RCV. Those duties are estimated to take up nearly 65% of their position, with the other 35% in other duties as assigned (which would include duties unrelated to RCV). Until council direction is given and a plan developed, the estimated costs are based upon current workloads and staff's vision of how voter outreach might be revamped and successfully implemented. The spreadsheet on RCV costs reflects 65% of the salary and benefit costs for the additional staff person.

Staff anticipates utilizing the additional election staff to provide education and outreach on RCV in odd-numbered years and using the same staff to provide education on primaries and general elections in even-numbered years. Because the voter education in even-numbered years is related to primary and general elections, the estimate for RCV expenses does not include the costs of that staff person in even-numbered years. It could be argued that omission understates the RCV costs, because in the absence of RCV, the elections staff would not recommend adding that staff person. For information, the additional costs for even years is shown in a footnote.

CAVEATS:

The estimated costs are preliminary in nature and for informational only; none of the estimated costs have been reviewed by the city manager or finance director, which would occur as part of a normal budgeting process. The forecast also assumes that the city will not experience increases in other areas of election administration (supply costs, polling place rental, etc.), which may occur. The annual staffing costs for the city's current election staff is not included in the estimate, except for overtime costs. The attached cost information does not include the costs of a voter guide brochure, as described in the next section.

Costs for broad-based voter outreach program?

At the June 9 charter commission meeting, Minneapolis City Clerk Casey Carl talked in great detail about Minneapolis's broad-based voter outreach program. Carl talked specifically about a voter guide that goes to all addresses in Minneapolis every year. The cost of a similar voter guide has not been included in the estimated costs of RCV elections, because this type of voter outreach is not specific to RCV and could be used to promote voter turnout regardless of the election system being used. Although the cost depends upon the city council's budget and policy priorities, an estimate is provided below for information.

For purposes of comparison, the creation, printing and mailing of one monthly *Minnetonka Memo* costs the city approximately \$10,400. For a four-page Minnetonka memo the estimated cost is broken down into:

Printing: \$4,500
Postage: \$4,900
Graphic Design: \$1,000

Total: \$10,400

The annual cost of creating, printing and mailing a voter guide would be in line with the cost of the *Memo*; however, actual cost could vary greatly depending on the length of the publication and the type of paper used.

Number of candidates in election races from 2000-2021:

2001:

General: Mayor, 2 candidates
Council Member at Large A, 1 candidate
Council Member at Large B, 1 candidate

2003:

Primary: Council Member Ward 1, 3 candidates
Council Member Ward 4, 3 candidates
General: Council Member Ward 1: 2 candidates
Council Member Ward 2: 1 candidate
Council Member Ward 3: 1 candidate
Council Member Ward 4: 2 candidates

2005:

Primary: Council Member at Large A, 5 candidates
Council Member at Large B, 3 candidates
General: Mayor, 2 candidates
Council Member at Large A, 2 candidates
Council Member at Large B, 2 candidates

2007:

Primary: Council Member Ward 4, 4 candidates
General: Council Member Ward 1, 1 candidate
Council Member Ward 2, 1 candidate
Council Member Ward 3, 2 candidates
Council Member Ward 4, 4 candidates

2009:

General: Mayor, 1 candidate
Council Member at Large A, 2 candidates
Council Member at Large B, 2 candidates

2011:

No primary.
General: Council Member Ward 1, 2 candidates
Council Member Ward 2, 1 candidate
Council Member Ward 3, 1 candidate
Council Member Ward 4, 2 candidates

2012:

Special Election: Council Member at Large B, 8 candidates

2013:

Primary: Council Member at Large B, 4 candidates; one withdrawal for At Large A

General: Mayor, 2 candidates

Council Member at Large A, 2 candidates

Council Member at Large B, 2 candidates

2015:

No primary: One candidate withdrew from Ward 2 race

General: Council Member Ward 1, 2 candidates

Council Member Ward 2, 2 candidates

Council Member Ward 3, 1 candidate

Council Member Ward 4, 1 candidate

2017:

No primary.

General: Mayor, 2 candidates

Council Member at Large A, 2 candidates

Council Member at Large B, 2 candidates

2018:

Special Election Council Member Ward 3, 5 candidates

2019:

Special Election Council Member at Large B, 1 candidate

2019:

No primary: One candidate withdrew from Ward 4 race

General: Council Member Ward 1, 1 candidate

Council Member Ward 2, 2 candidates

Council Member Ward 3, 2 candidates

Council Member Ward 4, 2 candidates

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2027</u>	<u>2029</u>
Current System Primary & General	\$ 60,991.42	\$ 235,000.00	\$ 101,402.00	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 110,924.00	\$ 115,046.00	\$ 119,170.00	\$ 123,298.00
RCV Estimate			\$ 169,255.88		\$ 169,724.49	\$ 164,905.33	\$ 169,869.27	\$ 171,928.72
Difference			\$ (67,853.88)		\$ (58,800.49)	\$ (49,859.33)	\$ (50,699.27)	\$ (48,630.72)

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2027</u>	<u>2029</u>
Current System General	\$ 60,991.42	\$ 63,192.00	\$ 65,252.00	\$ 67,313.00	\$ 69,375.00	\$ 71,439.00
RCV Estimate		\$ 169,255.88	\$ 169,724.49	\$ 164,905.33	\$ 169,869.27	\$ 171,928.72
Difference		\$ (106,063.88)	\$ (104,472.49)	\$ (97,592.33)	\$ (100,494.27)	\$ (100,489.72)

Notes:

1. The above is a summary of detailed costs shown on the last two pages of this attachment,
2. Even-year costs are provided as a basis of comparison. Costs are higher in 2020 than 2022 because of the presidential primary.

Actual costs incurred for past elections. The estimated costs on the following two pages were prepared based upon these actual costs.

2018 Ward 3 Special

Election Judge costs	\$ 7,121.59
Polling place room rental	\$ 160.00
Ballots	\$ 1,655.00
Supplies	\$ 1,557.93
Delivery Truck rentals	\$ 102.80
Total Cost	\$ 10,597.32

2019 Municipal General

Election Judge costs	\$ 36,839.98
Recount Election judge costs	\$ 696.28
Polling place room rental	\$ 770.00
Hennepin County expenses (Ballots, mailings, etc.)	\$ 7,899.76
Supplies	\$ 1,025.28
Delivery Truck rental	\$ 317.44
Cell phone costs	\$ 2,241.96
Estimated staff overtime costs	\$ 1,343.34
By-annual Equipment maintenance	\$ 9,694.40
Election day mileage reimbursement	\$ 162.98
Total Cost:	\$ 60,991.42

Budget for 2020:

Election judge salaries	\$ 175,000.00
All other Election Costs:	\$ 60,000.00
Total Cost	\$ 235,000.00

Estimated election costs with RCV

Description of cost items	2021	2023	2025	2027	2029
Election Judge costs	\$ 38,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 42,000.00	\$ 44,000.00	\$ 46,000.00
Training Costs	\$ 7,000.00	→	→	→	→
Polling place room rental	\$ 770.00	→	→	→	→
Hennepin County expenses (Ballots, mailings, etc.)	\$ 7,900.00	→	→	→	→
Supplies	\$ 1,100.00	→	→	→	→
Delivery Truck rental	\$ 320.00	→	→	→	→
Cell phone costs	\$ 2,242.00	→	→	→	→
Estimated staff overtime costs including estimated time for training and post-election tabulation and review	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 5,100.00	\$ 5,700.00	\$ 6,300.00	\$ 6,900.00
By-annual Equipment maintenance	\$ 9,700.00	→	→	→	→
Election day mileage reimbursement	\$ 160.00	→	→	→	→
Creation and distribution of materials and efforts for outreach and education	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 7,000.00
Average annual cost of additional Full Time staff to manage outreach and education (including benefits)	\$ 72,563.88	\$ 75,432.49	\$ 78,013.33	\$ 80,377.27	\$ 82,836.72
Total:	\$ 169,255.88	\$ 169,724.49	\$ 164,905.33	\$ 169,869.27	\$ 171,928.72

Notes:

1. Arrows indicate no change in the costs from the previous election cycle.
2. Increases in election judge costs and staff overtime costs are based upon the assumption of roughly 2% per year increase in hourly wages, rounded to \$1000 annually.
3. Cost of additional full-time staff reflects 65% of estimated salary and benefits (35% is attributable to non-RCV duties). If even-year salary and benefits are deemed to be RCV costs, the total for years 2022, 2024, 2026 and 2028 would be \$311,643.39.

Estimated election costs with current system estimates (primary and general election)

Description of cost items	2021	2023	2025	2027	2029
Election Judge costs	\$ 68,000.00	\$ 72,000.00	\$ 76,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 84,000.00
Polling place room rental	\$ 1,540.00	→	→	→	→
Hennepin County expenses (Ballots, mailings, etc.)	\$ 14,520.00	→	→	→	→
Supplies	\$ 1,600.00	→	→	→	→
Delivery Truck rental	\$ 640.00	→	→	→	→
Cell phone costs	\$ 4,484.00	→	→	→	→
Estimated staff overtime costs	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,120.00	\$ 6,242.00	\$ 6,366.00	\$ 6,494.00
By-annual Equipment maintenance	\$ 9,700.00	→	→	→	→
Election day mileage reimbursement	\$ 320.00	→	→	→	→
Total	\$ 101,402.00	\$ 110,924.00	\$ 115,046.00	\$ 119,170.00	\$ 123,298.00

Estimated election cost with current system (only general election)

	2021	2023	2025	2027	2029
Election judge Salaries	\$ 38,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 42,000.00	\$ 44,000.00	\$ 46,000.00
All other election costs:	\$ 25,192.00	\$ 25,252.00	\$ 25,313.00	\$ 25,375.00	\$ 25,439.00
Total	\$ 63,192.00	\$ 65,252.00	\$ 67,313.00	\$ 69,375.00	\$ 71,439.00

Notes:

1. Arrows indicate no change in the costs from the previous election cycle.
2. Increases in election judge costs and staff overtime costs are based upon the assumption of approximately a 2% per year increase in hourly wages, rounded to \$1000 annually.

MINNETONKA DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION - CITYWIDE

Population (2016):	51,752	
Average Household Size (2016):	2.28	
Median Income (2016):	\$86,559	
Income Distribution (2016):	More than \$200,00	14.5%
	\$150,000 - \$199,999	10.60%
	\$100,000 - \$149,000	18.90%
	\$75,000 - \$99,999	12.90%
	\$50,000 - \$74,999	16.20%
	\$35,000 - \$49,999	10.20%
	\$25,000 - \$34,999	7.10%
	\$15,000 - \$24,999	4.80%
	Less than \$15,000	4.80%
Race (2019 Census Estimates):	White	86.10%
	Black or African American	5.20%
	Asian	4.20%
	Hispanic	2.00%
	American Indian	0.20%
	Two or More Races	2.30%
Age Distribution (2016)	0-14	15.40%
	15-24	10.50%
	25-34	11.60%
	35-44	11.10%
	45-54	14.00%
	55-64	17.30%
	65-74	11.20%
	75+	8.90%

To: Minnetonka Charter Commission
From: Corrine Heine, City Attorney
Date: June 30, 2020
Subject: Meeting of July 7, 2020, Agenda Item 5

5. Review of amendment proposed by city council

On June 8, 2020, the city council adopted an ordinance to amend the city charter to provide for use of ranked choice voting in municipal elections. As required by state law, the city council submitted the ordinance to the charter commission for review.

The adoption of the ordinance initiated one of the four different methods under state law for amending the city charter. In this instance, state law requires that the charter commission review the proposed amendment. The commission has 60 days (until Aug. 7, 2020) to report back to the city council with any revisions that the commission wishes to propose to the charter amendment. The commission has the ability to extend the review period for an additional 90 days (until Nov. 5, 2020) if it requires additional time.

The statute expressly contemplates only that the commission provide the council with any proposed revisions to the ordinance. However, there is nothing in the statute that prohibits the commission from recommending that the charter not be amended at all.

The statute provides that, after receiving the commission's report, the council may ask the voters to approve either the amendment as originally adopted in the ordinance or the amendment as recommended by the charter commission. Again, the statute expressly contemplates only that the council make a choice between two different charter amendments, but the statute does not prohibit the council from rescinding the ordinance that it originally adopted.

The charter commission does not control whether the issue will go to the voters; that decision rests with the city council. The charter commission does have the ability to affect timing, because the statutory deadline for submitting ballot questions for the November 2020 election is August 21. If the commission submits its report within 60 days, the council would be able to submit the issue to the voters on the November 2020 ballot. If the commission extends its time to report to the city council, the city council may be unable to meet the August 21 deadline, which would cause a delay to a future special or general election.

The city attorney drafted the form of ordinance that the city council adopted. The ordinance amends the charter by requiring the use of ranked choice voting for the conduct of municipal elections and by removing all references to primaries from the charter.

At its June 23 meeting, there seemed to be consensus that the commission might discuss potential changes to the ordinance at the July 7 meeting but that the commission would not vote on any changes until after the July 14 meeting. The city attorney will prepare language for proposed changes to the ordinance only as requested by the commission.

ORDINANCE NO. 2020-12

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 2.06 AND 4.02 OF THE MINNETONKA CITY CHARTER, REGARDING ELECTONS; REQUIRING USE OF RANKED CHOICE VOTING; ELIMINATING USE OF PRIMARY ELECTIONS

The City of Minnetonka Ordains:

Section 1. Preamble. The city council adopts this ordinance pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 410.12, subdivision 5.

Section 2. Section 2.06, subdivision 5 of the Minnetonka city charter, relating to special elections to fill vacancies in the city council, is amended to read as follows:

Subd. 5. Special Election Requirements.

a. Except as provided in subdivison 5.b. below, special elections must be held at the earliest date possible under state law. Candidates must file for office no later than four weeks before the election.

b. If a special election occurs in the same year as a regular municipal election, the council may at its option schedule the special election to occur in conjunction with the regular municipal election rather than at the earliest possible date under state law.

Section 3. Section 4.02 of the Minnetonka city charter is amended to read as follows:

Section 4.02. Method of election.

The voters shall elect the mayor and council members by the method of Single Transferable Vote, also known as Ranked Choice Voting or Instant Runoff voting. The city council must provide by ordinance the ballot format and the rules for counting the votes and breaking a tie.

Section 4. The city clerk is directed to submit this ordinance to the charter commission for its review, as provided by law.

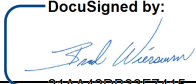
Section 5. The council hereby reserves its discretion to determine, after receiving the charter commission's recommendation, whether to submit this charter amendment to the voters at a general or special election or whether instead to rescind this ordinance.

Section 6. This ordinance and the charter amendments herein shall not take effect until 30 days after approved by 51 percent of the votes cast at a general or special election as determined by the city council.

The ~~stricken~~ language is deleted; the underlined language is inserted.

Adopted by the city council of the City of Minnetonka, Minnesota, on June 8, 2020.

DocuSigned by:

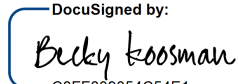


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Brad Wiersum, Mayor

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:



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Becky Koosman, City Clerk

ACTION ON THIS ORDINANCE:

Date of introduction: May 18, 2020
 Date of adoption: June 8, 2020
 Motion for adoption: Kirk
 Seconded by: Carter
 Voted in favor of: Carter-Calvert-Schaeppi-Coakley-Kirk-Schack-Wiersum
 Voted against: None
 Abstained: None
 Absent: None
 Ordinance adopted.

Date of publication:

CERTIFIED COPY:

I certify that the foregoing is a correct copy of an ordinance adopted by the city council of the City of Minnetonka, Minnesota, at a meeting held on June 8, 2020.

Becky Koosman, City Clerk

Date: _____

Corrine Heine

From: Nikol Jorgensen [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 20, 2020 6:56 AM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: RCV

Please allow voters to decide whether or not to use ranked choice voting.

Thank you,

Nikol

Corrine Heine

From: susan boren [REDACTED] >
Sent: Sunday, June 21, 2020 3:40 PM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

I want to weigh in to say I believe strongly that voters should be given the right to decide whether they want Ranked Choice Voting for Minnetonka. Please put it on the ballot and let voters be heard on the important issue.

Susan S. Boren
16523 Black Oaks Circle

Sent from my iPad

June 22, 2020

Dear Minnetonka Charter Commission,

Thank you for your study of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV).

At the last Charter Commission meeting, the statement was made by a Commission Member, and I paraphrase: "What is the problem we are trying to solve with RCV? I don't understand what the problem is."

The problem is racism.

According to the U.S. Census 2019 estimate, 86% of the citizens of Minnetonka are white. That means 14% are not white. It took until 2019 to finally vote a Black American onto our City Council. And how many non-whites have been appointed to city commissions right now, today?

There are qualified non-whites who could serve.

The problem is racism in Minnetonka. That is why Ranked Choice Voting is needed in Minnetonka.

In the last 2 weeks, three on our City Council have stated they want racism to end in Minnetonka. Mayor Wiersum said this in his letter to all citizens, and Councilmen Kirk and Calvert publicly said it as well.

You heard Casey Carl, City of Minneapolis election official, say twice in your last Charter Commission meeting that RCV provides equal access to the ballot for candidates and for voters, and this is what he likes best about it. He said "There's no such thing as a perfect election system. They're all based on values." For Minneapolis, the diversity of its people is embraced, and RCV is a tool that allows them to be visible and elected, if the people vote them in. Because they are on the ballot on Election Day.

What do we value in Minnetonka? If we believe the Mayor and several Councilmen, they want the end of racism.

Ranked Choice Voting is a tool to help end racism.

A vote against Ranked Choice Voting is a vote for racism.

You can continue to try to pick holes into RCV, even after a leading expert and professor has spoken highly of it to you in his testimony, and a world-leading expert from Harvard Business School (Dr. Michael Porter) has spoken locally and written on the need for RCV.

But at the end of the day, this is about racism in Minnetonka. I hope you do the right thing to end racism here.

Thank you.

Mary Pat Blake, 14800 Wychewood Road, Minnetonka, MN 55345

Corrine Heine

From: David Haeg [REDACTED] >
Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 1:29 PM
To: Corrine Heine; Dick Allendorf; Karen Anderson; John Cheleen; David Larson; John Northrup; Terry Schneider; Linnea Sodergren; LuAnn Tolliver; Brad Wiersum
Cc: Barb Westmoreland
Subject: Let the voters decide

Dear Charter Commission,

We read through the information packet for tonight's Charter Commission meeting and discovered multiple examples of misinformation and distortion about Ranked Choice Voting. Whatever the motives of those presenting, they are misguided in their understanding of Ranked Choice Voting and how it is beneficial for a community like Minnetonka.

One of the individuals testifying is identified as a board member of the Minnesota Voters Alliance (MVA), a group with a [long history of suing government officials and entities for laws that make voting easier and more accessible for voters](#). Among the many lawsuits, MVA filed to make party affiliation publically available in 2020, and lost, and filed suit to stop Minneapolis from using Ranked Choice Voting in 2009, and lost.

The Minnesota State Supreme Court unanimously ruled that Ranked Choice Voting is fully constitutional: "Every voter has the same opportunity to rank candidates when she casts her ballot, and in each round every voter's vote carries the same value." *Minnesota Voters Alliance v. FairVote Minnesota*, June 11, 2009.

The court's opinion by Chief Justice Magnuson confirmed that Ranked Choice Voting is consistent with the principle of one-person, one-vote, and arguments contrary to this ruling are inconsistent with Minnesota law and misleading. Federal courts have also ruled that RCV meets all tests under the U.S. Constitution.

So when MVA or others argue that under RCV some people have more votes than others, they are either mistaken or intentionally misleading. RCV is simply a consolidated runoff system; it combines the nonpartisan primary and general election into a single, more cost-effective and efficient election. Under both RCV and the current primary - general election system, voters have one vote per election. If a voter chooses to go to the primary and sit out the general because they are not happy with who made it through the primary, that's a voter's choice. If a voter selects a single candidate on a RCV ballot and chooses not to rank the others and that candidate doesn't make it through the runoff, that's a voter's choice. When this happens, election officials call the ballot "exhausted." The winning candidate always receives a majority of ballots continuing in the final round and in most cases, it is a majority of all ballots cast in the election.

The three speakers arguing against RCV on Tuesday night present pages of mistruths, cherry pick facts from opinion articles and cross out passages from the same articles that undermine their message. Reforms like RCV that empower voters and give more voters access to the ballot box have always drawn opponents seeking to protect the status quo. The fight for the voting rights of women and African Americans was long and hard and frankly, continues today. The fight to allow people in communities under custodial supervision to vote in Minnesota is not yet won.

Ranked Choice Voting is an improvement to our current system that is good for voters and candidates. As you already heard from Professor David Schultz, who you invited as a neutral figure to the January charter commission meeting, and non-partisan city clerks in your previous meeting, RCV:



Frequently Asked Questions

[What is RCV and how does it work?](#)

[Why should Minnetonka use it?](#)

[How did Ranked Choice Voting get started in Minnesota and Minnetonka?](#)

[What other cities use RCV and what have they learned?](#)

[Does RCV lead to higher voter engagement and turnout?](#)

[Is it confusing for voters?](#)

[Is it constitutional, and does it allow some voters to vote more than once?](#)

[What would be the cost to use it in Minnetonka?](#)

[Does RCV require a majority to win?](#)

[What is the process for adopting RCV in Minnetonka?](#)

[What if I make a mistake on my RCV ballot?](#)

[Could I hurt my favorite candidate's chances of winning if I rank other candidates 2nd or 3rd?](#)

[Do I have to rank candidates, or can I just pick one?](#)

[Does RCV help mitigate the influence of money in campaigns?](#)

[Who supports RCV?](#)

[Who opposes RCV?](#)

Common myths: Voter disenfranchisement and communities of color, favors one political party, too many candidates, favors incumbents, can be manipulated

What is Ranked Choice Voting?

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is a simple change that gives voters more voice and more choice in our elections and democracy. It is a popular, commonsense reform that ensures elected officials earn the broadest support possible in a single cost-saving election and allows for more candidates to run for office, giving voters more choice and more power at the ballot box.

How does Ranked Choice Voting work?

With Ranked Choice Voting, voters cast a single ballot, ranking the candidates in their order of preference (first choice, second choice, third choice, and so on). Ballots are counted in rounds. If a candidate receives a majority of first-choice votes, that candidate wins. If no candidate has a majority of first choices then the last-

place candidate is eliminated and those ballots are reassigned to the second choices on those ballots. This process continues until one candidate reaches a majority and wins. It works like a traditional two-round election, but occurs in a single, less expensive, higher turnout election. See details [here](#).

Why should Minnetonka adopt Ranked Choice Voting?

Ranked Choice Voting is a better way to vote because it promotes elections that are:

- more efficient
- more representative
- more participatory, inclusive and diverse
- more civil

RCV is **more efficient and saves taxpayer dollars** because it eliminates the costly low-turnout primary and combines the primary and general elections into one election in November when turnout is much higher and representative of our residents.

Minnetonka currently runs two elections for city council and mayor: a primary in August which narrows the field of candidates down to two, and a general election between those two candidates in November. Local primary elections have very low voter turnout, about 4%, and that tiny slice of the electorate currently decides who advances to the general election ballot, preventing the larger voter pool in November from weighing in on all the candidates.

This two-step process is costly to taxpayers and candidates, and time-consuming for staff, candidates, election judges, and voters. Further, very little media is focused on primaries, and candidates typically campaign only to the sliver of voters who attend them. Very few voters are aware of primaries and few show up. In city council elections, the last four August primary elections have averaged just 4% turnout, with general elections around 15%. Both seem pathetically low in a city that routinely attracts 85% of voters for national elections.

With RCV, there is just one election in November. This saves time and money for the city, candidates and voters, and is easier and more convenient for voters to turn out just once.

RCV is **more representative** because it gives voters more choice at the ballot box, and more people

participate in the entire process and are able to vote on all the candidates at once. We wouldn't have a small fraction of voters prematurely winnow the field of candidates in a low-turnout, early August primary.

RCV empowers all voters to weigh in on the full slate of candidates, in a single decisive election in November when turnout is higher and more representative of the community.

Increasing effective voter participation in this way is especially key for communities of color who are underrepresented in primaries. With RCV, a greater number of voters that are more broadly representative of the community are choosing our local officials.

RCV is more participatory, inclusive and diverse.

Under our current system, many aspiring candidates are discouraged from running because it is expensive to run both a primary and general election campaign or they worry that the primary electorate, which skews older, less diverse, and more affluent, could be less receptive to their candidacy.

RCV levels the playing field for candidates. All candidates are on the ballot in November, giving new candidates more time to campaign and allowing a broader, more diverse electorate the chance to weigh in. Voters can express their true preference knowing

that their second choice will count if their first choice doesn't continue in the runoff. This encourages more competitive elections, since RCV allows more candidates to run without fear of being a “wasted vote.”

RCV also encourages candidates to talk to all voters and seek support beyond their own base, resulting in officeholders who more fully represent the views and desires of the broadest swath of voters possible. [See outcomes in Minneapolis, St. Paul and St. Louis Park since 2009.](#) [Further, a 2016 study of RCV in California shows how RCV results in greater representation by women and people of color.](#) Election experts, polling data and academic literature refute the idea that RCV harms low income voters or communities of color.

RCV encourages civility and discourages negative campaigning: While it's often said that Minnetonka hasn't had negative or partisan campaigns, that doesn't mean it never will. Many other cities are experiencing an increase in the partisanship of their elections, and it would be unwise to pretend it can't happen here. RCV is proven to diminish the effectiveness of negative campaigning, where candidates try to convince voters that their opponent is terrible, so voters will cast ballots against the candidates they don't like, instead of for the candidates they do like, while the undecided

voters stay home and don't vote out of disgust for the negative system.

In contrast, RCV incentivises candidates to campaign positively on ideas and positions that matter to voters. Since candidates are motivated to secure second-choice votes from their opponent's supporters, RCV:

- Rewards candidates who appeal to a broad base of voters
- Reduces the incentive for candidates to attack their opponents and promotes more civil, issue-oriented campaigns
- Fosters coalition-building and compromise

Candidates behave differently knowing that being someone's second choice is a tangible benefit. Once in office, a winner who has built a broad coalition of support can more easily reach beyond their base to forge compromises and problem-solve the critical issues facing their communities. In an era of hyper-partisanship and divisive politics, RCV is a key response to our nation's growing polarization. See national [study](#) comparing voters' perceptions of civility in cities using RCV and in those that do not.

Polling by Edison Research in Minneapolis, St. Paul and St. Louis Park following RCV elections shows that voters believe the campaigns have been very civil. In

fact, 93 percent of Minneapolis voters and 90 percent of St. Paul voters in 2017 said that candidates spent little time criticizing each other -- and these were in cities with hotly contested mayoral races. In 2019 in St. Louis Park, 71 percent of voters said the same. See RCV By The Numbers and video testimony from voters [here](#).

How did Ranked Choice Voting get started in Minnesota and in Minnetonka?

In 2004, the League of Women Voters Minnesota conducted an exhaustive, two-year study of voting systems and [reached a consensus that endorsed](#) Ranked Choice Voting as an option for local and state elections in Minnesota. [See summary position on LWV-MN website here](#). In 2006, FairVote Minnesota, with the support of the League of Women Voters Minneapolis and former Minneapolis Mayor Don Frazer, led a grassroots campaign to adopt RCV in Minneapolis that was approved by a 2-to-1 margin by voters in 2006. St. Paul voters adopted Ranked Choice Voting in 2009 following the Minnesota Supreme Court ruling that RCV is constitutional.

In Minnetonka, a group of resident volunteers began learning about RCV and started to advocate with city council members in 2018. They reached out to Fairvote Minnesota for technical assistance (city charters and processes are complicated!) and to connect with other RCV supporters in their community (there were already several hundred). Two years and thousands of volunteer hours later, there is a true grassroots movement to improve our local elections process.

What has been the experience of Minnesota cities that use Ranked Choice Voting?

More than 545,000 Ranked Choice Voting ballots have been cast in Minnesota since 2009 when Minneapolis began using RCV. It has also been used in St. Paul since 2011 and in St. Louis Park since 2019. By all measures, RCV has been a resounding success in all three cities. Voter participation has increased, more candidates are offering voters more and diverse choices, and voters overwhelmingly say that RCV is easy to use and that

they like it better than the old system. See more information regarding the results, turnout, voter opinions, and [impact of RCV elections in Minnesota cities here.](#)

Where is Ranked Choice Voting used?

Ranked Choice Voting has been used in major democracies around the world in countries like Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Australia, and New Zealand. In the U.S., it is used in several southern states (Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina) for military and overseas voters, and in nearly 20 cities in states across the country from California to New Mexico to Utah to Colorado to Minnesota to Maine. It is slated for use in several other local jurisdictions, including New York City beginning in 2021.

Here in Minnesota, RCV is used in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and St. Louis Park, and is being considered in a growing number of other cities, including Bloomington, Minnetonka, Red Wing and Rochester.

Maine became the first state to use RCV in 2018 and will be using it for presidential elections starting in 2020.

Five states successfully used RCV in the 2020

Democratic presidential primary.

[See full list of places that use RCV here.](#)

Does Ranked Choice Voting lead to higher voter engagement and turnout?

Ranked Choice Voting automatically increases voter participation by eliminating the low-turnout primary and allowing voters to consider the full slate of candidates in the general election when turnout is higher and more diverse. In other words, even if general election turnout stays the same, those same voters (75% of whom don't vote in the primary) will have more fully participated in the elections process. Having one decisive election in November encourages more candidates to engage with more voters over a longer period of time, and allows more people to fully participate in the entire election process. Plus, voters have to show up at the polls only once, which is easier and less expensive for everyone.

Turnout in any election is determined by a variety of factors, but most importantly by the competitiveness of a race, media attention and candidate get-out-the-vote efforts. The [Minnesota experience](#) demonstrates that RCV fosters more competitive races and has helped to boost turnout. Last year, when St. Louis Park first used RCV, voter turnout increased by nearly 50% in the November general election, from 4,436 to 6,619 voters citywide, over 2015, the last similar election with the Mayor and both at-large council seats on the ballot. In 2017, turnout in Minneapolis was 43%, the highest in 20 years and a more than 32% increase over the relatively high turnout in 2013. A similar trend was seen in St. Paul and in other cities across the country with the implementation of RCV.

One reason more residents are voting is an increase of candidates and competitive races that create awareness of the election within the community. Conversely, without a competitive election, there is no “choice” for the voters, so they simply don’t vote. Potential candidates will be more likely to run when they don’t face the 2-step primary and general election process, and they know they’ll have more time to campaign for an election day with the greatest turnout. **More candidates leads to greater competition, which leads to more active campaigning and election awareness,**

which leads to greater voter turnout, and more engaged communities.

RANKED CHOICE VOTING
MINNEAPOLIS

Is Ranked Choice Voting confusing for voters?

This is by far the most frequently asked question and the answer is, no, based on extensive polling of voters who have actually used Ranked Choice Voting. In elections with three or more candidates, voters have the option to simply rank their choices instead of voting for just one candidate. RCV makes voting simpler by asking voters to come out once and eliminating the need to be “strategic” with their vote. Just because it’s a change on the ballot doesn’t mean it’s difficult for voters to use. **In fact, the valid ballot rate in the most recent Minneapolis election in 2017 was 99.96 percent, demonstrating high levels of voter confidence and proficiency in ranking their ballots.**

Evidence has shown time and time again that voters find RCV simple to use, and they like the greater choice and freedom of expression that they are given. Over 100 million people use RCV across our country and around the world. In the first highly competitive RCV mayoral race in Minneapolis in 2013, an astonishing 88

percent of voters ranked their ballots. Last year in St. Louis Park, where Edison Research polled voters on election day, 92% of polled voters said they found RCV simple to use, including 93 percent of people of color and 90 percent of those aged 55 and older. These results are remarkably consistent with [previous RCV election polls in Minneapolis and St. Paul](#) across different levels of income, age and education. Because other cities have already adopted RCV, it will be easier for Minnetonka to re-apply the process and implement it efficiently and effectively.

Is Ranked Choice Voting constitutional?

Yes. In 2009, the Minnesota State Supreme Court unanimously ruled that Ranked Choice Voting is fully constitutional: “Every voter has the same opportunity to rank candidates when she casts her ballot, and in each round every voter's vote carries the same value.” [Minnesota Voters Alliance v. FairVote Minnesota](#), June 11, 2009. Federal courts have also ruled that RCV meets all tests under the U.S. Constitution.

Does Ranked Choice Voting allow some voters to vote more than once?

No. With Ranked Choice Voting, you have the option to rank your choices, but your vote only counts for one candidate in the final round. The same is true for all voters. As the Minnesota Supreme Court case made clear: Every voter gets an equal vote. In each round of counting, your ballot counts as one vote for your highest-ranked candidate still in the running. If your candidate is still viable, your vote will count for your favorite candidate in the runoff round. If your candidate has been eliminated – **just as in a traditional runoff election** – you need to settle for one of the remaining candidates. Your vote automatically counts for whichever continuing candidate you prefer.

Under our current primary-general election system, a voter may vote for a candidate in the primary and then vote for a different candidate in the general election, if their preferred candidate loses the primary. Or they may vote for the same candidate in the general election. **RCV is like a primary and general election on a single voting day.** If a voter's candidate is

eliminated, and no other candidate has a majority of support, that voter's next-ranked vote can be reallocated toward another choice.

What is the cost of implementing Ranked Choice Voting?

The cost of implementing Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is different in each city, depending on the voting equipment and outreach efforts they have in place when making the switch and whether or not the elections are held in odd or even years.

Minneapolis was the first city in Minnesota to adopt Ranked Choice Voting over a decade ago. Their pioneering work on ballot design, voting machine compatibility, and voter education made it easy for cities to follow their example, and with only a fraction of the effort.

Minnetonka is in a good position to implement RCV cost-effectively:

- Since Minnetonka municipal elections are held in odd years when we don't have federal or state

BANNED GERMANY
MINNEAPOLIS

elections, RCV will eliminate the cost of the primary altogether, saving the city that \$50,000 expense.

- Minnetonka already uses the same tabulators to scan paper ballots as those used to scan the RCV paper ballots in Minneapolis and St. Louis Park.
- Minneapolis and St. Louis Park have a blueprint for implementing RCV and tabulating the results that Minnetonka can use to avoid unnecessary startup costs.
- Software certified to instantly tabulate results is expected as early as 2021, which will reduce the cost of ballot tabulation.
- While the city may provide voter education about the new process, this cost should not be significantly higher than what the city is already doing for voter education, such as printing sample ballots and posting information about the election and voting process on the city website and in communications to voters. Community organizations, including FairVote Minnesota and League of Women Voters, also provide grassroots voter outreach and education, reducing voter education costs.

Given that the blueprint and equipment for conducting RCV elections in Minnetonka is already in place

elsewhere in Hennepin County, there should not be a significant cost to implement RCV. The elimination of the primary will result in cost savings to taxpayers.

Of note for community leaders who may still be concerned about voter confusion and wonder whether great expense is needed to explain to voters how to rank their choices: the State of Maine successfully implemented RCV for the first time in a statewide election with a high voter turnout and spent only \$83,000 state-wide on implementation, or less than \$0.08 per voter.

Does Ranked Choice Voting require a majority to win?

Yes. In a Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) election for a single race, it is always the case that the winner receives a majority of ballots cast (50%+1) in the final round.

Is it common for candidates to ultimately

win who finished in second-place in the first round?

No. To date, of the 24 Ranked Choice Voting elections in Minnesota in which winners were decided in a runoff (with second- or third-choice votes), the second-place finisher won in only two of those elections.

This is similar to the second-place finisher in the current primary system winning the general election. It doesn't happen often, but it can happen in highly competitive races. Twenty-four percent (25 of 102) of all races using RCV in Minnesota have been decided with second or third-choice votes, and that outcome is accomplished in a single cost-effective, high-turnout election. For the vast majority of elections that are decided without the need for more than one round of tabulation, no money is wasted on an unnecessary primary.

What is the process for adopting Ranked

Choice Voting in Minnetonka?

The adoption of Ranked Choice Voting for mayoral and city council elections would require amending the city charter, which can be done by ordinance or by referendum.

If by ordinance, the vote would require a unanimous consensus by the city council. This is the approach St. Louis Park took.

Alternatively, a question could be placed on the ballot by a majority vote of the city council or charter commission or by voter petition with 1,600 signatures of Minnetonka residents. If the question is initiated by the council, it must be reviewed by the charter commission. If it is initiated by a citizen petition, it does not require approval by the council or charter commission. Regardless of how it appears on the ballot, the city council must approve the language of the ballot question. If 51 percent or more of those who vote on the ballot question support it, RCV would be adopted for mayoral and city council elections.

While school board elections are held at the same time as municipal elections, RCV is not currently available

for school board as those elections are governed by state law, not city charter.

BANNED SECRET VOTING
MINNETONKA

What if I unknowingly make a mistake on my ballot? Will my vote be counted?

First of all, just like now, if you make a mistake on your Ranked Choice Voting ballot that would disqualify your ballot (e.g., ranking two different candidates as your favorite), the tabulator would reject your ballot and you would have an opportunity to correct it. However, if you choose not to correct it, then just like now, your vote might not count depending on the error that you made. In other words, whether using RCV or the current system, mistakes are handled the same way.

Could it hurt my preferred candidate's chances of winning if I

rank other candidates 2nd and 3rd?

No. Your vote counts for your second choice only if your first choice is eliminated. Your vote only counts for your third choice only if your first and second choices are eliminated.

Do voters have to rank all the candidates, even candidates they don't like?

No. You can rank as many, or as few, candidates as you like, up to the limit of choices permitted by the final rules of the city election. In most cases, it's up to 3 choices. The value of ranking is to ensure your ballot continues to count if your first choice is eliminated.

Does Ranked Choice Voting help mitigate the

influence of money in campaigns?

We have observed that Ranked Choice Voting has helped reduce the influence of money in local campaigns. RCV levels the playing field and gives a fighting chance to candidates who have good ideas, but not big bank accounts. In the 2013 Minneapolis mayoral race, the winning candidate was outspent 3-to-1 by her leading opponent. Similar disparities in campaign spending by candidates and their PACs have been seen in other races elsewhere in the United States. Why? Because most of the big money raised directly by campaigns, PACs, or Independent Expenditures is used for negative TV ads or mailings. Attack ads and messaging are not only unhelpful in an RCV campaign, but can actually backfire. This was seen in the Ward 2 council race in St. Paul in 2015 and St. Paul mayoral race in 2017, in which Independent Expenditure organizations sent negative mailers against the winning candidate. Negative campaigning may work under the traditional system, [but is not a successful strategy under RCV.](#)

Who supports Ranked Choice Voting?

Voters support Ranked Choice Voting, winning on the ballot in most of the nearly 20 cities using it. In Minneapolis, it passed 2:1 on the ballot, and in St. Paul by 52 percent of the voters. St. Louis Park city council adopted RCV by unanimous vote following a popular grassroots effort advocating for the change. Most recently, RCV was adopted by 78 percent of voters in New York City.

RCV is also supported by a wide range of Minnesota political, business, community, and philanthropic leaders, media publications and civic organizations, including the League of Women Voters Minnesota and the DFL, Independent, Green, and Libertarian parties.

The Star Tribune, Sun Sailor and Current and ECM papers, and Rochester Post Bulletin have editorialized in favor of RCV, as have a number of papers across the country, including the New York Times and Washington Post.

Well-known political leaders like former Senator Dave Durenberger, former Congressman Tim Penny and current Congressman Dean Phillips are strong RCV champions. Rep. Phillips recently introduced the Voters

Choice Act to provide support to cities and states

RANKED CHOICE VOTING
MINNETONKA

transitioning to RCV.

Minnetonka Representative Patty Acomb and Senator Steve Cwodzinski are co-sponsors of the [Local Options Bill](#) that would make it easier for cities like Minnetonka to adopt Ranked Choice Voting.

In 2019, former Bloomington mayor Gene Winstead and two dozen business and health care leaders, including Marilyn Carlson Nelson, Jonathan Weinhagen, Bill and Penny George, Marc Gorelick, Penny Wheeler, Kelly Doran, Peter Hutchinson and Karla Ekdahl, Ken Powell and Wendy Bennett, among others [signed a letter of support](#) for the [bi-partisan RCV Local Options Bill introduced by Bloomington Steve Elkins in the House and Scott Jensen in the Senate.](#)

A growing number of national political scientists and business professors are championing RCV as a top reform to address our nation's growing polarization, including Stanford Professor Larry Diamond, award-winning author Lee Drutman, and Harvard Business School professor Michael Porter, to name a few.

Who opposes Ranked Choice Voting?

The main group opposed to Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in Minnesota is the Minnesota Voters Alliance, which challenged RCV with a lawsuit in 2009 and lost. The [Minnesota Supreme Court ruled unanimously that RCV is constitutional](#). It is the same group that led the unsuccessful pro-Voter ID push in Minnesota in 2011 and recently lost its [case before the Minnesota Supreme Court to require public disclosure of voter information](#).

Senator Kiffmeyer, whose Elections Committee is leading an effort to preempt RCV in Minnesota, has served on their board. Former Senate Minority Leader Tom Bakk is also a co-sponsor of the RCV pre-emption bill.

What are some common myths about Ranked Choice Voting?

Myth: Ranked Choice Voting disenfranchises voters.

No, it doesn't. To the contrary, evidence shows that Ranked Choice Voting increases turnout and enfranchises more voters.

Opponents cite the case of a voter who chooses to rank fewer candidates than are available, ranking one or two candidates, for example, when they could rank two or three, and the candidate they rank is eliminated because they received the lowest number of votes. In this case, a voter is choosing to cast fewer preferences than are allowed in an election. This scenario is no different from our current system when someone votes in the primary for a candidate who doesn't make it to the general election. That voter is still able to vote for a remaining candidate in the general election. If they decide they don't like the remaining candidates, it's their choice to not vote in the general. No voter is disenfranchised; to the contrary, the voter is given more power to rank candidates in order of their preference. If they choose to rank only some, that is their choice. Indeed, if Minnetonka adopted RCV, there would be one election in November, increasing the number of voters having a say in our local elections - the opposite of disenfranchising voters.

As we describe above, 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.

Another way to think about it: Currently, 4% of voters participate in the Minnetonka city council primary, and 15% in the general election. This means that just 25% of the city council general election voters participated in the primary, and **were able to indicate more than one preference**. But in nearly every Ranked Choice Voting election, over 75% of voters indicated **more than one preference**. This shows, once again, how our current voting system is inferior.

RCV would eliminate our low-turnout primary and bring together the most choices and most voters in one single, decisive, cost-efficient election in November. It rewards candidates who can reach beyond their base to build broad coalitions of voters and listen to all voices in their community.

Myth: Ranked Choice Voting disadvantages communities of color and less affluent voters.

No, it does just the opposite. [Ranked Choice Voting \(RCV\) has been shown to enfranchise communities of color by eliminating low-turnout primary elections which are disproportionately attended by older, less diverse, and more affluent voters than the general election.](#) For example, in 2005 (before RCV was

enacted), general election turnout in Minneapolis was nearly three times greater than primary turnout (8 percent compared to 21 percent) in Ward 5 which is predominately people of color compared to two times greater for the city overall (15 percent to 30 percent). RCV mitigates this inequity by holding one election in November, when turnout is higher and more diverse. In San Francisco, effective voter participation increased as high as 300 percent in traditionally low-turnout precincts.

As discussed above, RCV helps to increase and diversify the voters participating as well as the candidates running. Over time, [RCV has proven to yield more elected officials from historically underrepresented communities](#). RCV allows candidates to run without fear of being eliminated in a low-turnout primary, as well as the opportunity to garner votes from voters who are no longer afraid of splitting or wasting their vote.

Hear voices from from communities of color, both candidates and voters, on how RCV helps expand electoral power in their communities in [post-election video testimony here](#).

Myth: Ranked Choice Voting favors one party over another.

Ranked Choice Voting doesn't favor any political party; it simply ensures that outcomes reflect the will of the majority of voters. Fundamentally, RCV is about increasing the range of viable choices for voters by eliminating the fear of spoiler candidates, regardless of party affiliation. That's just good, smart democracy. Furthermore, political leaders from all parties have endorsed RCV. Utah, a Republican state, passed RCV legislation in 2018 enabling cities to use RCV, and Maine, a state known for its large number of independent voters, adopted and started using RCV that same year.

Myth: Ranked Choice Voting means too many candidates will run.

No, only in very rare cases. This issue is raised because of the large number of candidates on the 2013 ballot for Minneapolis mayor which was a result of the first competitive open mayoral race in 12 years coupled with no party endorsements and a very low filing fee for a city as large as Minneapolis. The city has since implemented a requirement to collect a minimum number of signatures or pay a higher filing fee, similar to St. Paul, so voters likely won't see such a long ballot again. In 2017, the number of candidates was half that in 2013 and similar to a typical competitive primary for mayor in Minneapolis, the largest local election in Minnesota. This is not the case in any other city in

Minnesota. In mayoral and council races, the number of candidates running in an open or competitive race is typically between three and five.

Myth: Ranked Choice Voting favors incumbents or Ranked Choice Voting favors challengers.

We hear both arguments. The truth is Ranked Choice Voting does not favor incumbents or challengers. It favors candidates who make an effort to talk to more voters, actively reach out beyond their base for second- and third- choice support and, ultimately, who appeal to the broadest number of voters.

A [research paper](#) from Utah State University examining the 2013 Minneapolis RCV election found no evidence that RCV supports incumbent candidates. Three of the nine incumbents seeking reelection lost their races. Similarly, in the St. Louis Park at-large City Council race last year, the incumbent came in third. By eliminating the primary, RCV lowers barriers for entry and opens up the opportunity for new voices and candidates to enter the race and win. If the incumbent is strong, that candidate is unlikely to garner a strong challenger just like now. If the incumbent is not very strong, the race may draw challengers and one of them may win. These political dynamics are the same under any voting system.

Myth: Ranked Choice Voting results in winners who are everyone's second choice.

This is not possible. Candidates must have strong first-choice support to move on to the next round. If a candidate gets few first choices, that candidate will be eliminated and not be able to return even if he was the second choice on many voters' ballots.

Myth: You can harm your candidate by ranking them first, or RCV can be manipulated.

Prepare to go down the rabbit hole! If a candidate had perfect information about how everyone would vote, AND was able to coordinate a precise number of their own supporters to vote for less popular candidates, it is theoretically possible they could eliminate a stronger opponent in the primary stage of our current voting system and in a RCV election. However, elections simply don't work this way - candidates don't know exactly what the vote totals will be and it would be dumb to tell your supporters to attempt this strategy. Also, this scenario is more likely in our current system, since there would be more opportunity to coordinate this scheme over 2 separate voting days than on a single ranked ballot. It's mathematically possible, but impossible in the real world.

Some cities have rejected Ranked Choice Voting. Why should we adopt it?

While some jurisdictions may have repealed Ranked Choice Voting when anti-democratic forces were threatened by its success (among them [Ann Arbor, Michigan](#), following the election of the city's first African American mayor, and Burlington, Vermont, following the election of a Reform Party candidate), momentum is on the side of RCV because it is a people-powered reform and has proven to be so successful and popular with voters.

As described above, Minnesota's two largest cities and suburban St. Louis Park have successfully used RCV, and [polling shows](#) that voters find it easy to use and prefer it over the old system. Moreover, RCV use across the country is expanding with several cities adopting this pro-voter system every year, and many states advancing ballot measures and legislation for use of RCV in state elections.

Info

[Benefits](#) | [How](#) | [Events](#) | [Fairvote MN](#)

Contact

David Haeg

Corrine Heine

From: Paul Dienhart [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 6:16 PM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Ranked choice voting

Just a comment:

With increasing polarization in our political process, including candidates who choose to represent only a minority fraction of the electorate, I think ranked choice voting is essential to saving our democracy. I commend the Minnetonka officials for advancing the idea.

There's actually a good analysis of the benefits of ranked choice voting in a recent "Patriot Act" on Netflix:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MykMQfmLlro>

Paul Dienhart
2344 Nottingham Crt.
Minnetonka, MN

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Corrine Heine

From: Katie Pierson [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 3:56 PM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: Ranked Choice Voting

Dear Charter Commission,

I'm writing to urge you to please finish your work re: RCV so voters can decide in November. A 4% turnout in our primaries is unacceptable. We need RCV to increase candidate and voter participation and make our local elections -- and policy makers, and policies -- more inclusive and diverse. It's time. Thank you.

Katie Pierson
10327 Belmont Road
Minnetonka, MN 55305
952-687-1613

[REDACTED]

Corrine Heine

From: carina [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 10:10 PM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: rcv mtka

hello charter commission,

i am writing to ask that you please complete your work so the voters can decide the issue in november. four % turnout primaries are unacceptable and rcv is needed to increase candidate and voter participation and make our local elections more inclusive and diverse.

i hope you will take this seriously and let us vote about rcv in november!

carina jensen

Corrine Heine

From: Corrine Heine
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:18 PM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: FW: I support Rank Choice Voting

From: Jeanne Lutgen [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2020 1:00 PM
To: Corrine Heine <cheine@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Re: I support Rank Choice Voting

Please allow the citizens of Minnetonka to decide if they want to use Rank Choice Voting. I listen to your meetings and am so embarrassed and disappointed with the reasons given to not use it. Seniors that I know and talk to about voting get it. Let's get real. There are people of all ages who may need help understanding something new. I am 76, an election judge for nine years and trust me, people of all ages ask for help.

With such a small turn out for primaries it is easier for an incumbent to win on name recognition alone. We deserve more time to meet and hear from a more diverse group of candidates.

I hope I'm wrong in thinking that you are putting your personal interests ahead of those of the community.

Please stop hiding behind a "concern" for seniors. I know the cost is another issue. Again, what do we value? Let us hope it is an election process that works for all.

Jeanne Lutgen

Corrine Heine

From: Sharon Grimes [REDACTED] >
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:49 PM
To: Corrine Heine
Cc: david.haeg@fairvotemn.org
Subject: RCV

Hello, Corrine.

I was one of those who spoke in support of RCV at the city council meeting. I feel that the two (?) comments against RCV were either incorrect or inaccurate. One person said older voters would have difficulty. I'm an over-70 voter and have friends who're older than me who have used and had NO difficulty with it. I have no trouble understanding it. This critic also was inaccurate when he said the League of Women Voters was against it. (A subsequent speaker clarified and corrected his claim.)

Another critic talked about ballot exhaustion, which seemed like a weak theory with little credibility. Voters already can and do decide not to vote for some offices because they have not taken time to study candidates. They will study those for offices about which they feel strongly. Voters using RCV will always have the choice to vote for just one candidate instead of ranking them all.

I believe RCV will save money by eliminating primaries, which have extremely low turnout . This will lead to more voters having a final say in who represents them.

I realize the Charter Commission has a lot of work to do to get this on the ballot for November. I feel that in these polarized tumultuous times, getting this ready for a referendum vote is more important than ever because there will likely be high turnout.

Thank you for your hard work.

Sharon Grimes
14301 Stewart Ln, #201
Minnetonka 55345

[REDACTED]

Corrine Heine

From: Corrine Heine
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:21 PM
To: Corrine Heine
Subject: FW: RCV and the 6.8.20 council meeting
Attachments: Letter to the editor rough draft.docx

From: Tom Potvin [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 19, 2020 2:05 PM
To: Deborah Calvert <dcalvert@minnetonkamn.gov>; Brad Wiersum <bwiersum@minnetonkamn.gov>; Susan Carter <scarter@minnetonkamn.gov>; Brian Kirk <bkirk@minnetonkamn.gov>; Rebecca Schack <rschack@minnetonkamn.gov>; Bradley Schaeppi <bschaeppi@minnetonkamn.gov>; Kissy Coakley <kcoakley@minnetonkamn.gov>; John Northrup <jnorthrup@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: RCV and the 6.8.20 council meeting

Hi,
I wrote a rough draft letter to the editor with the intention of having it edited by a professional writer. As it turns out LTE's are to be limited to no more than 350 words so I had to edit it down substantially. From that edited version the writer edited the letter even further, that will be the version I submit for publication. So, much was lost in editing I feel compelled to send you all the rough draft.
I have 2 charter commission members included here, feel free to pass along to the other members.

Tom Potvin
Minnetonka

Letter to the editor

Ranked Choice Voting Minnetonka

Sitting in on the Minnetonka Council meeting 6.8.20 waiting for the issue of RCV we heard from the Police Chief about how forward thinking and proactive the MTKA police dept. has been on the issue of race equity and building a culture of inclusion, diversity and understanding of different cultures. While behind some cities in this effort they appear to be part the leadership in change. This is very refreshing to see the proactive nature in addressing this issue. In stark contrast, is the way the Mayor and City Council seem to handle some issues. There appears to be culture of reacting to situations instead of allowing our community to be leaders of inevitable change. The Mayor in particular seems to have a way telling the voters what they want to hear and coming up with reasons why it isn't going to work instead of listening to the will of the people and facilitating that.

On the issue of RCV and our lack of action Mayor and City Council

- From the outset the mayor has been slow rolling the issue, creating a time crunch for adding to the 2020 ballot, presumably, to push the issue to the 2021 ballot when it will not affect his chances of re-election that same year. If he worked for the people instead of serving his own agenda he wouldn't have to worry about being re-elected. That will be an off election where only about 4% of registered voters turn out instead of on election years when voter turnout has exceeded 80% of registered voters in Minnetonka.
- During the last election cycle for city council several new candidates were elected most claiming to be pro RCV. All I have seen from the council, except Kissy Coakley, is wishy washy bawling and stalling. In a professional setting it is rare to see one express their stand on an issue for 10 minutes and say little about their stand, a lot of whining and double speak.
- Now that they stalled so long they are claiming there might not be enough time to get this on the 2020 ballot when upwards of 80% of the registered voters will turnout and cast their vote yay or nah on the issue RCV. Now they claim the city staff have been pushed to hard with other issues, if they wouldn't have slow rolled this it could have already been done. I want to point out Brian Kirk in particular as he is my councilmen, he gave me the impression that he was going to push the issue of RCV forward and after he was elected he seems to have fallen in-line with the Mayors agenda or maybe the old way of doing politics "play along to get along". I can see he is trying to say the right things but as we all know actions speak louder than words. We have all experienced times at work where the pressure is put on to complete a project in time, to push for something beneficial to the company, in our case the community.

On the issue of the city council meeting 6.8.20:

- Virtual meeting
- Public commenter's on hold for 3 hours + waiting for a chance to speak on RCV pro and con, no recognition of this by the mayor or council members, no other agenda items with people on hold
- After listening to a long line of people where there were only 2 in opposition

- a. one claimed it was too complicated for the voters in Minnetonka especially older voters who might not understand how this RCV works. People have been RCVing since childhood ie: I'll have grape soda- we're out; ok I'll have orange- we're out of that also; ok make it cherry. Plain and simple this is fear mongering, if you can't support an argument play the fear card.
- b. One talked about to expensive- initially it will cost more to setup and educate voters but in the long run it will save taxpayers money. With RCV, primaries would be eliminated. Primaries cost taxpayers \$50,000 and approx. 4% of voters show up to primaries so who is being represented here? Again, fear mongering, coupled with only telling part of the story.
- c. The council chimed in on how they are in favor but for different reasons, time crunch being common reason, they were on the fence for adding 2020 ballot. Again Mayor has slow rolled it from the start.
- d. The Mayor talked about how the charter commission is in control of the issue now, they can take up to 180 days to come up a recommendation on the issue, which the council can accept or decline. The mayor talked like the charter commission is a separate entity and that it is out of his control for now, he neglected to inform people that he is on the charter commission.
- e.

The chairman of the charter commission, John Northrup, is on record stating he does not see a problem that needs fixing. A lot of people did not see a problem with policing but that didn't stop the Minnetonka police chief from being proactive to change the culture of the Minnetonka police department before the George Floyd issue. Just because one man does not see a problem does not mean there is not a problem or future problem.

The bottom line is this:

- a. The charter commission does not need to weigh in on this, the city council just needs to put it on the ballot and let the voters decide if RCV is right for them.
- b. It's not illegal
- c. It's not expensive
- d. It's not their choice, it's the voter's choice

Do what you were elected to do, represent the people of Minnetonka. The best way to do this is to let the voters decide what they want.

Tom Potvin

Minnetonka

Corrine Heine

From: Jack Barbier [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 12:05 PM
To: Corrine Heine
Cc: Brian Kirk; Deb Calvert
Subject: To you and the Charter Commission...:

Please, I would ask you to complete your work on RCV soon so that it can be put on the ballot in November.

Do not delay this unnecessarily. Let the community/ citizens decide in November!!!

I will be very, very unhappy if this doesn't occur.

Regards, Jack Barbier, ChFC
13001 St. David's Road, Minnetonka