



**Crystal Charter Commission
Meeting Agenda and Notice**

**Thursday, January 22, 2015
6:30 p.m.**

**Crystal City Hall
4141 Douglas Drive North
Conference Room A**

- I. Call to order and roll call
- II. Consideration of the meeting minutes from June 10, 2014
- III. Election of Officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary)*
- IV. Review Annual Report of Chair
- V. Methods of Amending the Charter
- VI. Discussion Articles
- VII. Other Business*
- VIII. Adjournment

**Denotes no supporting information included in the packet.*

Posted: January 16, 2015

**Minutes of the Meeting for the
Home Rule Charter Commission
of the City of Crystal
Tuesday, June 10, 2014**

I. Call to order and roll call

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the meeting of the Crystal Charter Commission was held commencing at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 10, 2014, at Crystal City Hall, 4141 Douglas Drive North, in the City of Crystal. The meeting was called to order by Chair Harley Heigel.

Attendance

The assessing/customer service specialist recorded the attendance with the following members present: Joe Selton, Doug Brown, Naomi Davidson, Harley Heigel, Joel Franz, Jim Oathout, Jeffrey Munson, Samantha Erickson and Jennifer Sodd. Also present: Commission Attorney Michael Norton, City Manager Anne Norris, City Clerk Chrissy Serres, and Assessing/Customer Service Specialist Gail Van Krevelen.

II. Consideration of the meeting minutes from April 22, 2014.

Moved by Commissioner Franz and seconded by Commissioner Munson to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2014 regular meeting with no exceptions:

Motion carried without dissent.

III. Review Charter Commission reappointments for 2015

Several members of the Charter Commission have terms expiring in 2015. When asked, all indicated they would likely be seeking re-appointment except Commissioner Oathout.

IV. Discussion regarding ranked-choice voting with speakers in favor and opposed

Jeanne Massey and Mike Griffin from FairVote Minnesota spoke in favor of ranked-choice voting.

Devin Rice of the Minneapolis Charter Commission spoke to the challenges of ranked-choice voting.

After further discussion, commissioners asked city staff to check with other cities of similar size to Crystal that have used ranked-choice voting for a longer period of time than Minneapolis, and what their experiences with it have been.

V. Discuss memo regarding methods of amending the City Charter

City Attorney Mike Norton reviewed the memo which discussed the ways in which the City Charter may be amended.

VI. Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

VII. Adjournment

Moved by Commissioner Davidson and seconded by Commissioner Brown to adjourn.

Motion carried without dissent.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Unapproved

January 13, 2015

Chief Judge Peter A. Cahill
Hennepin County Government Center
300 South Sixth St
Minneapolis, MN 55487-0422

Dear Honorable Judge Cahill:

I want to report to you on the Commission's activities, as required by Minnesota Statutes, Section 410.05, and subdivision 2. The Crystal Charter Commission met on April 22 and June 10, 2014.

During the meetings, the Commission continued to review, research, and discuss various aspects of ranked-choice voting. Additionally, the commission voted in favor of adopting a data practices policy and designating a responsible authority to respond to requests for government data maintained by the Commission.

To date, the Charter Commission has no vacancies on its 9-member commission.

Yours truly,

Harley Heigel
Charter Commission Chair

cc: Mike Norton
Anne Norris
Chrissy Serres
Commission Members

Kennedy

&

Graven

CHARTERED

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 30, 2014

TO: Crystal Charter Commission

FROM: Michael T. Norton, City Attorney

RE: Methods of Amending the City Charter

Pursuant to your request in connection with the consideration of rank choice voting (RCV), the following is a discussion as to how an amendment to the City Charter may be accomplished based on Minnesota Statutes Section 410.12.

The City Charter may be amended in any of the following ways:

- 1. Amendment by Petition of the Voters.** Voters may petition the Charter Commission to amend the City Charter by filing a petition with the Charter Commission. The petition must contain all of the following elements:
 - a. Must be signed by at least 5% of the registered voters (based on the total number of votes cast at the last state general election in the City).
 - b. Must be filed at least seventeen weeks before a general election.
 - c. Must contain the full text of the proposed Charter amendment (except if the proposed amendment contains more than 1,000 words). If the proposed amendment is more than 1,000 words, the petition must contain a summary of between 50-300 words that discusses the nature of the proposed amendment. The summary must also contain a statement of the objects and purposes of the amendment proposed and an outline of any proposed new scheme or framework of government. It must be sufficient to inform the signers of the petition as to what change in government is

being sought to be accomplished by the amendment. The summary along with the amendment must be submitted to the Charter Commission for its approval before the petition is signed. The Charter Commission has ten days to review the summary and amendment and require modifications.

- d. Each petitioner's signature on the petition must be accompanied by the petitioner's address.
- e. Must contain the names and addresses of at least five people who are responsible for circulating and filing of the petition. The persons circulating the petition must also sign an affidavit for each petition that they circulated that states that they personally circulated the petition and the signatures were made in their presence and are believed to be genuine.

All petition papers must be assembled and filed with the Charter Commission at the same time. The Charter Commission must then transmit the petition to the City Council. During this time, the petition's signatures must be verified by the City Clerk. If the petition is deemed sufficient by the City Clerk, the City Council must determine the form of the ballot for the Charter amendment. An insufficient petition may be amended.

If 51% of the votes cast on the amendment at a general or special election are in favor of its adoption, then the amendment will take effect 30 days from the date of the election or at a time specified by the amendment.

2. **Amendment proposed by the City Council.** The City Council may propose Charter amendments to the voters by ordinance. The City Council must submit the ordinance to the Charter Commission for its review. The Charter Commission may approve or reject the proposed amendment or suggest a substitute amendment within 60 days (it may request up to a 90 day extension). After receiving notification by the Charter Commission of its decision, the City Council may submit the amendment or the Charter Commission's revised amendment to the voters by ballot. If 51% of the votes cast on the amendment at a general or special election are in favor of its adoption, then the amendment will take effect 30 days from the date of the election or at a time specified by the amendment.
3. **Amendment by Ordinance.** Upon recommendation by the Charter Commission, the City Council may enact a charter amendment by ordinance, which does not require an election. Upon receiving a recommendation for an amendment from the Charter Commission, the City Council must hold a public hearing on the proposal. The public hearing notice must contain the text of the proposed amendment. The public hearing must be held at least two weeks but not more than one month after the public hearing notice is published. Within one month of holding the public hearing, the City Council must vote on the proposed Charter

amendment ordinance. The ordinance is enacted if it receives an affirmative vote of all members of the City Council and is approved by the Mayor. An ordinance amending the City Charter is not effective until 90 days after its passage and publication or at a later date that is specified by the ordinance. After the ordinance is enacted, within 60 days, the voters may file a petition requesting a referendum on the amendment with the City Clerk. The petition must be signed by at least 5% of qualified voters (based on the total number of votes cast at the last state general election in the City) or 2,000 voters, whichever is less. The ordinance is then not effective until it is approved by the voters at a general or special election.

I have attached Minn. Stat § 410.12 in its entirety:

410.12 AMENDMENTS.

Subdivision 1. Proposals.

The charter commission may propose amendments to such charter and shall do so upon the petition of voters equal in number to five percent of the total votes cast at the last previous state general election in the city. Proposed charter amendments must be submitted at least 17 weeks before the general election. Only registered voters are eligible to sign the petition. All petitions circulated with respect to a charter amendment shall be uniform in character and shall have attached thereto the text of the proposed amendment in full; except that in the case of a proposed amendment containing more than 1,000 words, a true and correct copy of the same may be filed with the city clerk, and the petition shall then contain a summary of not less than 50 nor more than 300 words setting forth in substance the nature of the proposed amendment. Such summary shall contain a statement of the objects and purposes of the amendment proposed and an outline of any proposed new scheme or frame work of government and shall be sufficient to inform the signers of the petition as to what change in government is sought to be accomplished by the amendment. The summary, together with a copy of the proposed amendment, shall first be submitted to the charter commission for its approval as to form and substance. The commission shall within ten days after such submission to it, return the same to the proposers of the amendment with such modifications in statement as it may deem necessary in order that the summary may fairly comply with the requirements above set forth.

Subd. 1a. Alternative methods of charter amendment.

A home rule charter may be amended only by following one of the alternative methods of amendment provided in subdivisions 1 to 7.

Subd. 2. Petitions.

The signatures to such petition need not all be appended to one paper, but to each separate petition there shall be attached an affidavit of the circulator thereof as provided by

this section. A petition must contain each petitioner's signature in ink or indelible pencil and must indicate after the signature the place of residence by street and number, or other description sufficient to identify the place. There shall appear on each petition the names and addresses of five electors of the city, and on each paper the names and addresses of the same five electors, who, as a committee of the petitioners, shall be regarded as responsible for the circulation and filing of the petition. The affidavit attached to each petition shall be as follows:

State of)

)

ss.

County of)

..... being duly sworn, deposes and says that the affiant, and the affiant only, personally circulated the foregoing paper, that all the signatures appended thereto were made in the affiant's presence, and that the affiant believes them to be the genuine signatures of the persons whose names they purport to be.

Signed

(Signature of Circulator)

Subscribed and sworn to before me

this day of

Notary Public (or other officer)

authorized to administer oaths

The foregoing affidavit shall be strictly construed and any affiant convicted of swearing falsely as regards any particular thereof shall be punishable in accordance with existing law.

Subd. 3. May be assembled as one petition.

All petition papers for a proposed amendment shall be assembled and filed with the charter commission as one instrument. Within ten days after such petition is transmitted to the city council, the city clerk shall determine whether each paper of the petition is properly attested and whether the petition is signed by a sufficient number of voters. The city clerk shall declare any petition paper entirely invalid which is not attested by the circulator thereof as required in this section. Upon completing an examination of the petition, the city clerk shall certify the result of the examination to the council. If the city clerk shall certify that the petition is insufficient the city clerk shall set forth in a certificate the particulars in which it is

defective and shall at once notify the committee of the petitioners of the findings. A petition may be amended at any time within ten days after the making of a certificate of insufficiency by the city clerk, by filing a supplementary petition upon additional papers signed and filed as provided in case of an original petition. The city clerk shall within five days after such amendment is filed, make examination of the amended petition, and if the certificate shall show the petition still to be insufficient, the city clerk shall file it in the city clerk's office and notify the committee of the petitioners of the findings and no further action shall be had on such insufficient petition. The finding of the insufficiency of a petition shall not prejudice the filing of a new petition for the same purpose.

Subd. 4.Election.

Amendments shall be submitted to the qualified voters at a general or special election and published as in the case of the original charter. The form of the ballot shall be fixed by the governing body. The statement of the question on the ballot shall be sufficient to identify the amendment clearly and to distinguish the question from every other question on the ballot at the same time. If 51 percent of the votes cast on any amendment are in favor of its adoption, copies of the amendment and certificates shall be filed, as in the case of the original charter and the amendment shall take effect in 30 days from the date of the election or at such other time as is fixed in the amendment.

Subd. 5.Amendments proposed by council.

The council of any city having a home rule charter may propose charter amendments to the voters by ordinance. Any ordinance proposing such an amendment shall be submitted to the charter commission. Within 60 days thereafter, the charter commission shall review the proposed amendment but before the expiration of such period the commission may extend the time for review for an additional 90 days by filing with the city clerk its resolution determining that an additional time for review is needed. After reviewing the proposed amendment, the charter commission shall approve or reject the proposed amendment or suggest a substitute amendment. The commission shall promptly notify the council of the action taken. On notification of the charter commission's action, the council may submit to the people, in the same manner as provided in subdivision 4, the amendment originally proposed by it or the substitute amendment proposed by the charter commission. The amendment shall become effective only when approved by the voters as provided in subdivision 4. If so approved it shall be filed in the same manner as other amendments. Nothing in this subdivision precludes the charter commission from proposing charter amendments in the manner provided by subdivision 1.

Subd. 6.Amendments, cities of the fourth class.

The council of a city of the fourth class having a home rule charter may propose charter amendments by ordinance without submission to the charter commission. Such ordinance, if enacted, shall be adopted by at least a four-fifths vote of all its members after a public hearing upon two weeks' published notice containing the text of the proposed amendment

and shall be approved by the mayor and published as in the case of other ordinances. The council shall submit the proposed amendment to the people in the manner provided in subdivision 4, but not sooner than three months after the passage of the ordinance. The amendment becomes effective only when approved by the voters as provided in subdivision 4. If so approved, it shall be filed in the same manner as other amendments.

Subd. 7. Amendment by ordinance.

Upon recommendation of the charter commission the city council may enact a charter amendment by ordinance. Within one month of receiving a recommendation to amend the charter by ordinance, the city must publish notice of a public hearing on the proposal and the notice must contain the text of the proposed amendment. The city council must hold the public hearing on the proposed charter amendment at least two weeks but not more than one month after the notice is published. Within one month of the public hearing, the city council must vote on the proposed charter amendment ordinance. The ordinance is enacted if it receives an affirmative vote of all members of the city council and is approved by the mayor and published as in the case of other ordinances. An ordinance amending a city charter shall not become effective until 90 days after passage and publication or at such later date as is fixed in the ordinance. Within 60 days after passage and publication of such an ordinance, a petition requesting a referendum on the ordinance may be filed with the city clerk. The petition must be signed by registered voters equal in number to at least five percent of the registered voters in the city or 2,000, whichever is less. If the requisite petition is filed within the prescribed period, the ordinance shall not become effective until it is approved by the voters as in the case of charter amendments submitted by the charter commission, the council, or by petition of the voters, except that the council may submit the ordinance at any general or special election held at least 60 days after submission of the petition, or it may reconsider its action in adopting the ordinance. As far as practicable the requirements of subdivisions 1 to 3 apply to petitions submitted under this section, to an ordinance amending a charter, and to the filing of such ordinance when approved by the voters.

History:

(1286) RL s 756; 1907 c 199 s 1; 1911 c 343 s 1; 1939 c 292 s 1; 1943 c 227 s 1; 1949 c 122 s 1; 1959 c 305 s 3,4; 1961 c 608 s 5,6; 1969 c 1027 s 3; 1973 c 503 s 1-4; 1986 c 444; 1998 c 254 art 1 s 107; 1999 c 132 s 42; 2005 c 93 s 1; 2008 c 331 s 7; 2010 c 184 s 43

Crystal primary highlights the need for a smarter voting system

BY PATRICK O'CONNOR
GUEST COLUMNIST

Few things trouble me more - as an election administrator and as a citizen - than a low-turnout election.

An election in which few eligible voters participate is, by definition, unrepresentative. And sometimes the results seem strikingly unreflective of the population as a whole.

Looking at the primary in neighboring Crystal, where voters had three competitive, multicandidate local races to win now, I couldn't help but wonder what kind of outcomes a Ranked Choice Voting process might have yielded.

Ranked choice allows a municipality to skip the low-turnout August primary, instead leaving the vetting and culling of candidates to the November elector-

ate: a bigger, more diverse - demographically and ideologically - cross-section of the population.

As it stands, all three races are now narrowed to just two candidates and those candidates will be competing head-to-head until November, which is a recipe for negative campaigning and more fuel on the fire of voter cynicism and disengagement. These factors won't help the continued dwindling of political participation.

Ranked Choice Voting offers a smarter, more efficient, and more representative way to choose our leaders. I know from experience: I had the privilege of serving as interim elections director in Minneapolis in 2009 when that city first implemented ranked choice. The rollout was a success, with an overwhelming majority of voters finding it both simple and satisfying to use.

That success was amplified last November, when Minneapolis voters again used (and loved) it - this time in a competitive, multicandidate mayoral race as well as several multicandidate city council races. Once again, the process worked: voters had a wider and more diverse range of candidates to choose from and the winners reflected a broader consensus.

What was missing was a separate low-turnout August primary for starters. And maybe more importantly, voters were spared the nasty negative campaigning that's unfortunately become standard in traditional, two-person contests. Since candidates were also competing for second-choice votes, they largely campaigned on issues and ideas, forgoing ad hominem attacks that degrade political discourse.

Ranked choice allows voters to rank candidates in order of

preference: first choice, second choice, third choice. In a single-seat election, if a candidate receives a majority of first-choice voters, he or she wins. If not, the least popular candidate is eliminated and his or her ballots are divided among the remaining candidates according to those voters' second choices. If there's still no majority winner, this process repeats until one candidate gains a majority of continuing ballots (or until all seats are filled in a multi-seat election).

By folding two elections into one, ranked choice accomplishes what traditional two-round elections (such as an August primary and a November general) do - but in a single cost-effective election with broader voter participation.

Ranked choice proved its "doability" in 2009, and since then - with the arrival of ranked

choice-capable voting and tabulation technology, it's only gotten simpler. Voters in Minneapolis and St. Paul have left behind the exclusionary and artificially limited summer primary, instead opting for a longer, more complete and issue-rich political dialogue that produces consensus outcomes.

After the successful 2009 election, I called that process one of the most significant civic exercises in Minnesota history. I believe that more strongly than ever - and I remain hopeful that more Minnesota cities will embrace ranked choice as a way to significantly improve our political process.

Patrick O'Connor is a retired Hennepin County Auditor/Treasurer and served as Acting Elections Director for Minneapolis in 2009. He lives in Golden Valley.

Ranked-choice voting is needed at all levels to ensure a true choice

Disenchanted voters want alternatives, need them, yet the system is stacked against this.

By JACK ULDRICH

This spring, a Rasmussen poll found that more than half of U.S. voters believe that neither of the two “major parties” is the “party of the American people.” The percentage of voters who report feeling disengaged from both the Republican and the Democratic parties had risen to a troubling 53 percent — up several points in less than a year.

And just last month, a majority of U.S. adults — 58 percent — polled by Gallup said that a viable third political party is necessary because Republicans and Democrats “do such a poor job” representing the people.

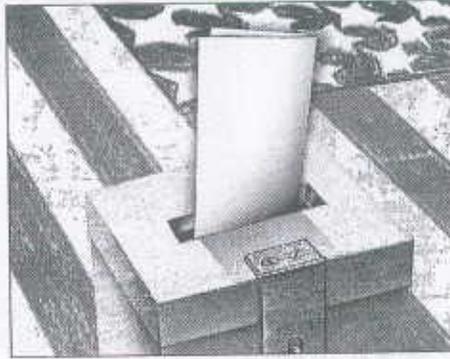
To those of us who’ve long supported the Independence Party of Minnesota, the irony is painful: Never has there been a greater need for the IP. And yet, we’re struggling.

Why is this?

As someone who has worked very hard to engage civic-minded Minnesotans in the IP over the years, and who has seen many other passionate IP advocates do the same, I can tell you that it’s not for lack of effort. Nor is it for lack of a smart, appealing platform that speaks to Minnesotans’ penchant for fiscal responsibility, civil liberties and a common-sense, solutions-oriented approach to governance.

The reason is that the system is stacked against us.

And by “us” I mean most Minnesotans — not just the Independence Party. Vot-



FRED MATAMOROS • News Tribune/MCT

ers across the political spectrum are sick of partisan polarization and ideological grandstanding. They value compromise, consensus-building and getting things done, yet our electoral system is tailor-made to perpetuate the two-party dysfunction that continues to turn people off.

The outmoded plurality system we use to elect our leaders all but guarantees that third parties and their candidates, however compelling, are usually assumed to have no chance of winning. In the absence of ranked-choice voting (RCV) — which allows voters to rank their preferences rather than vote for just one — only a major-party candidate is perceived as viable.

A vote for a third party is considered a wasted vote, and most voters won’t risk inadvertently helping to elect the major-party

candidate they dislike most.

It’s another painful irony: The Independence Party, which I consider the essence of pragmatism, constantly suffers from voters’ impulse to be pragmatic in the voting booth. We understand that impulse, but it is profoundly disempowering to the legions of voters in the mainstream middle.

In a nation disenchanted by the parties and the limits of our plurality election system, the IP and other third parties present refreshing alternatives, but they face colossal challenges in convincing voters they can compete. This problem extends beyond any one candidate, race or election cycle. Our challenge is systemic. That doesn’t mean it’s not worth mounting; it’s imperative that we continue to try.

Yet it also requires big-picture thinking, including implementation of ranked-choice voting at the state and national levels. This not only would give voters more choice and power, it would eliminate the “wasted vote” syndrome; reduce the role of money in campaigns, and foster greater civility, compromise and consensus-building to address our state’s critical issues.

I hope the many Minnesota voters who often feel alienated by the two major parties will, rather than disengaging or giving way to cynicism, join me in working for a system that makes positive, rational change possible.

Jack Uldrich is the former chair of the Independence Party of Minnesota.

State alleges open meeting law violations during Watt, Erkenbrack demonstrations

By Joe
Bowen

December 26, 2014 at 9:53
am

Information Policy Analysis Division alleges meetings were improperly moved, public members improperly barred

Crystal's city government is facing continued criticism from Communities United Against Police Brutality.

After a series of demonstrations in the late summer and fall of 2013, the group solicited an advisory opinion from the Minnesota Department of Administration's Information Policy Analysis Division.

That opinion, signed Oct. 23 by the Acting Commissioner Matthew Massman, alleges that Crystal's city council did not comply with the state's open meeting laws on a handful of occasions spanning August 2013 to February 2014.

At one particularly contentious meeting on Sept. 3, 2013, for instance, Crystal Mayor Jim Adams informed the roughly 20 audience that the council would not take comments on officers Alan Watt and Rob Erkenbrack. Communities United alleges that both were disciplined for speaking out against misconduct in the city's police department, and members see Erkenbrack's recent \$160,000 settlement with the city as vindication of that view.

Adams' announcement caused several minutes of general unrest amongst the audience – several of whom later said they expected an opportunity to speak about the officers – and the council agreed to a brief recess as a result.

Several in the audience eventually adjourned to the city hall parking lot to talk amongst themselves, but later found they were prevented from re-entering the building by uniformed Crystal police officers.

At the time, Communities United President Michelle Gross said she believed the move to be illegal because it turned the public meeting into a closed meeting. Even members who were not being disruptive were not allowed re-entry, she explained.

The policy analysis division agreed, saying that the council had authority to bar disruptive persons, "but did not have authority under (open meeting laws) to exclude all non-disruptive members of the public, thereby creating a de facto closed meeting."

In another meeting on Feb. 18, 2014, the council allegedly violated open meeting laws by reconvening a similarly-disrupted meeting in a basement conference room after calling a short recess. When the meeting reconvened, the opinion states, the council did not adequately inform members of the public who remained in the original meeting room and were, presumably, under the impression the council was still in recess.

"By not giving notice to the public, those who remained in the regular meeting room waiting for the recess to end had no opportunity to attend the public meeting the Council was conducting in the downstairs room," Massman writes.

In all, Massman's opinion asserts that the city council did not comply with open meeting laws on three of the eight occasions Gross brought up. In the remaining five, it could not determine if the open meeting laws were broken based on evidence supplied by Gross and responses supplied by City Attorneys Mike Norton and Susan Torgerson.

In some of those five instances, though, the opinion alleges that the council did not properly close a meeting, but stops short of saying it was not in compliance with open meeting laws.

Despite a state agency agreeing that certain laws were broken, the policy analysis division's opinion might not amount to more than a slap on the wrist.

"The opinions have nonbinding authority," said Director Stacie Christensen, adding that there is no relevant enforcement arm for the opinion.

"What we've seen governments do is acknowledge, 'OK, we've made a mistake this time and now we've been told what the law says,'" she explained. "They can't go back and change what happened in the past, but they can use it as a learning tool."

Christensen said her division's opinion could be used in a lawsuit against the city, but that scenario rarely occurs and would happen at the volition of one of the parties involved.

Gross said she had not made a decision on a possible lawsuit.

"Generally, it depends on the conduct of the city," she said. "If they go back to doing what they've been doing, what we complained about in the first place, then we wouldn't have any choice but to sue."

Norton and City Manager Anne Norris could not be reached for comment.

Contact Joe Bowen at joe.bowen@ecm-inc.com



MEMORANDUM

August 29, 2014

To: Members of the Crystal Charter Commission
CC: Anne Norris, City Administrator
From: Jeanne Massey, Executive Director, FairVote Minnesota
Subject: Additional information regarding Ranked Choice Voting

This memo is in response to the request, following the June 10 Charter Commission discussion of Ranked Choice Voting, for additional information regarding the cost effectiveness of RCV for small cities and alternative ways to amend a municipal charter to allow for the use of RCV.

Cost effectiveness of RCV for small cities

Ranked Choice Voting is used in a handful of small U.S. cities, including Hendersonville, North Carolina; Cambridge, Massachusetts; Telluride, Colorado; and Takoma Park, Maryland – in addition to larger cities, including Minneapolis and Saint Paul; Portland, Maine; and four Bay Area cities. These communities elected to use RCV for reasons other than to save costs, primarily to ensure that winning candidates in multicandidate competitive races receive broad majority support or in the case of Cambridge, proportional representation. In most of these cases, the city moved from a plurality method (the top vote-getter in a single election) to an RCV system, and so did not experience the cost-saving elimination of a separate primary or runoff election.

Given the variation in and uniqueness of how elections are governed and implemented in different jurisdictions, there is very little comparative cost information among these cities. Cambridge, for example, has been using RCV since the 1940s in elections held every two years and administration of the system is routine. Typical startup costs associated with a switch to RCV include new ballot design and tabulation and voter education. Over time, these costs are normalized and long-term savings can be expected due to the consolidation of two elections into one. It's worth noting that changes in state or local election laws or procedures or an increase in general voter education or equipment upgrades, for example, can create additional costs irrespective of the city's switch to RCV.

Crystal would not see a cost savings from elimination of the primary for municipal races because a primary would still be required for state and federal partisan races. However, the startup costs of switching to RCV would be minimal, as Minneapolis has laid the groundwork for other Hennepin County communities. Most significantly, it has developed ballot design, voter education tools and processes, and tabulation protocols that align with the new upgraded voting equipment Hennepin County purchased last year. Technological advances allow the new equipment to read a ranked ballot and create a data file of the rankings (and soon, we anticipate, to automatically tabulate the ballots) as well as to tabulate traditional ballots. This change would certainly benefit Crystal. So, too, would passage of Senator Rest's Local Options bill that would provide standards and guidance for implementing RCV.

FairVote Minnesota would be happy to assist the city of Crystal in identifying specific potential administrative adjustments and costs related to the implementation of RCV for municipal elections in accordance with the city's election procedures. Minneapolis City Clerk Casey Carl and former

Interim Elections Director Patrick O'Connor are also helpful resources regarding the administration of RCV.

Conclusion

FairVote Minnesota applauds the Crystal Charter Commission's consideration of RCV for municipal elections. As was seen in the city's recent primary, turnout was a mere 12 percent in the three highly competitive municipal contests. Compare this to the 84 percent turnout in the 2012 general election for mayor in Crystal—or 79 percent turnout in Section 1 that year, or 66 percent in Ward 3, or 66 percent in Ward 4. **Even the lowest-turnout ward in the last general election was more than 5 times greater than this year's primary turnout.**

The very small, unrepresentative sliver of the electorate that participates in primaries eliminates all the choice, save two candidates, in each race. Under RCV, all the candidates appear on the general election ballot when turnout is markedly higher and more diverse. Candidates must also reach beyond their base for 2nd and 3rd choice votes, fostering more civil campaigns and winners with broad support. RCV promotes more inclusive, participatory and civil elections.

RCV is especially beneficial in special elections that require two rounds of costly elections outside of the normal election cycle and typically attract a tiny fraction of eligible voters.

Finally, I'd like to respond to claims made by RCV political opponent Devin Rice at the June charter commission meeting and highlight once again how simple Minneapolis and St. Paul voters find RCV—across all income, age and ethnicity groups—preferring it over the old system. We've shared with you the poll findings. In Minneapolis alone:

- 88 percent of voters ranked their ballots in the mayor's race
- 85 percent said RCV was easy to use
- The valid ballot rate in the mayor's race was 99.94 percent
- 68 percent want to continue using it and 61 percent want to use it statewide

The results were similar in St. Paul and we've seen this experience in cities across the country.

Thank you for this opportunity to share information about Ranked Choice Voting and the charter amendment process. I hope this information is helpful as you consider the potential and value of RCV for Crystal municipal elections. Please don't hesitate to let me know if you have any questions or would like any additional information.