

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



Agenda Date:	September 3, 2024
Action Required:	Consideration of ordinance and resolution adoption
Presenter:	Taylor Yowell, Voter Registrar
Staff Contacts:	Eden Ratliff, Deputy City Manager Robinson Hubbard, Deputy City Attorney
Title:	Ordinance to Adopt Ranked Choice Voting ("RCV") as the Voting Method for the June 2025 City Council Primary election (2nd reading)

Background

In July 2021, the Virginia General Assembly passed a bill to amend the Code of Virginia § 24.2-673.1 to authorize localities to implement Ranked Choice Voting in elections of members of a county board of supervisors or a city council. The Electoral Board and Registrar of the City of Charlottesville have studied the potential benefits of Ranked Choice Voting, including review of the successful conduct of a Ranked Choice Voting election in June 2023 for the nomination of members of the Arlington, Virginia Board of Supervisors, and determined that there are no technical barriers to conducting the 2025 Charlottesville City Council primary using the same Ranked Choice Voting process.

Discussion

Ranked Choice Voting is an election method which allows voters the option to rank candidates in order of preference (first, second, third choice, etc.), though they are not required to do so. If a candidate receives more than half of the first choices, that candidate wins, as in other elections.

If there is no majority winner after counting the first choices, the race is decided by an instant runoff. The candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and voters who ranked that candidate as their first choice will have their votes counted towards their second choice. This process continues until a candidate receives more than one half of the vote count, winning the election.

Ranked Choice Voting has been successfully adopted in various localities and states across the nation and has been shown by research to support more diverse candidate pools and improved civility in campaigns and elections. The use of Ranked Choice Voting in the June 2025 primary election allows for the introduction of this new method to our community.

We propose that the Ordinance is passed to allow implementation of Ranked Choice Voting.

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan

This change aligns with the City's commitment to encourage civility in politics, more diverse candidates for office, and broader participation in elections.

Community Engagement

If this Ordinance is passed, then City Council, with the assistance of the General Registrar and Board of Elections, must engage in community engagement to educate the public on the change to Ranked Choice Voting and its perceived advantages. Pursuant to VA Administrative Code 1VAC20-100-80, the local governing body must develop and distribute an educational/outreach program.

Budgetary Impact

If this Ordinance is passed, then there will be additional expenditures needed for new hardware/software for RCV tabulation, a mailing to all registered voters, publication of notice in the local newspaper(s), and other changes necessary to implement this new voting method. The estimated cost for these upgrades is \$26,460.

Recommendation

Adopt the Ordinance and subsequent appropriation resolution.

Alternatives

Leave the current voting format as it is.

Attachments

1. ranked choice voting ordinance 8.1.2024