

# Arlington Town Meeting — Motion to Amend

**ARTICLE NO. 24**

**Dated: April 25, 2021**

I, Paul Schlichtman, do hereby submit the following Motion to Amend Article 24:

**VOTED:**

“AN ACT AMENDING THE TOWN MANAGER ACT OF ARLINGTON  
RELATIVE TO RANKED CHOICE VOTING”

Section 1. Chapter 503 of the Acts of 1952 (The Town Manager Act of Arlington) as subsequently amended, is hereby amended by inserting a new Section 8B “Ranked Choice Voting” as follows:

Section 8B. Ranked Choice Voting

The offices of Select Board, School Committee, Town Clerk, Moderator, Housing Authority, and Assessor shall be elected by ranked choice voting at the annual election, **provided that ranked choice voting shall only be used in races where a single candidate is to be declared the winner and not in races where more than one person is to be elected.** “Ranked choice voting” shall mean a method of casting and tabulating ballots in which voters rank candidates for office in order of preference. Ranked choice voting shall apply to a single-seat office only when the number of candidates exceeds two ~~and to a multi-seat office when the number of candidates exceeds the number of seats to be elected.~~ Ranked choice voting elections shall be tabulated in rounds as follows.

(a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

1. “Batch elimination” means the simultaneous defeat of multiple candidates for whom it is mathematically impossible to be elected.
2. “Concluded ballot” means a ballot that does not rank any continuing candidate, contains an overvote at the highest continuing ranking, or contains two or more sequential skipped rankings before its highest continuing ranking.
3. “Continuing candidate” means a candidate who has not been defeated or elected.
4. “Highest-ranked continuing candidate” means the continuing candidate with the highest ranking on a voter's ballot.
5. “Last-place candidate” means (i) the candidate with the lowest vote total in a round of the ranked-choice voting tabulation; or (ii) a candidate that is defeated in batch elimination.

6. “Overvote” means a circumstance in which a voter ranks more than one candidate at the same ranking.

7. “Ranking” means the number assigned on a ballot by a voter to a candidate to express the voter's preference for that candidate. Ranking number one is the highest ranking, ranking number two is the next-highest ranking and so on.

8. “Skipped ranking” means a circumstance in which a voter does not use a ranking and ranks a candidate with a subsequent ranking.

(b) In any single-seat election, each round begins by counting the number of votes for each continuing candidate. Each ballot counts as one vote for its highest ranked continuing candidate. Concluded ballots are not counted for any continuing candidate. Each round then ends with one of the following two outcomes:

1. If there are more than two continuing candidates, the last-place candidate is defeated, or the last-place candidates are defeated in batch elimination, and a new round begins.

2. Otherwise, the candidate with the fewest votes is defeated, the candidate with the most votes is elected, and tabulation is complete.

~~(c) In any multi-seat election, the first seat is filled by the tabulation in subsection (b). The remaining seats are filled by repeated application of subsection (b); provided, however, that all choices marked for candidates who have already been elected shall be disregarded and votes for an elected candidate shall instead count for the next highest ranked continuing candidate.~~

~~(d)~~ **(c)** A candidate is defeated in “batch elimination” if one of the following applies:

(i) The candidate's current vote total plus all votes that could possibly be transferred to the candidate in future rounds is not enough to equal or surpass the candidate with the next-higher current vote total; or

(ii) the candidate has fewer votes than a candidate described in (i).

~~(e)~~ **(d)** If two or more last-place candidates are tied and batch elimination does not apply, the candidate with the fewest votes in the prior round is defeated. If two or more such tied candidates were tied in the prior round, the second tie shall be decided by referring similarly to the standing of candidates, in terms of votes, in the second-prior round. This principle shall be applied successively as many times as necessary, a tie shown in any prior round being decided by referring to the standing of the candidates in the round immediately preceding the tie.

~~(f)~~ **(e)** The Town Clerk shall have the authority to make any changes to the ranked choice voting ballot and tabulation process necessary to ensure the integrity and smooth functioning of the election, provided that ranked choice voting shall still be used and the smallest number of changes are made to achieve such purpose.

Section 2. This Act shall take effect upon approval of the majority of Arlington voters by local ballot question.”

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Schlichtman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "S".

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Paul Schlichtman , Precinct 9,

Date Voted: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken: \_\_\_\_\_