

Subject: Re: Warrant Article Hearing Select Board Meeting 3/8/2021

To: Ashley Maher <AMaher@town.arlington.ma.us>

From: Greg Dennis <gdennis@alum.mit.edu>

Date: 03/03/2021 10:47 PM

CC: "tmm19.joconor@gmail.com" <tmm19.joconor@gmail.com>, Lauren Costa <LCosta@town.arlington.ma.us>

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Hi Ashley,

Here are some comments for the Board:

Select Board,

As you may recall, at last year's Special Town Meeting, the Election Modernization Committee placed three articles on the warrant, and we were grateful to receive the Select Board's unanimous endorsement of all three. For a number of reasons, the complexity of the new online Town Meeting format being among them, we later changed our recommended vote on the third article--the adoption of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for town offices--to No Action, with the intention of postponing it until the April regular Town Meeting.

As promised, we have now brought that article back for consideration by the Select Board and Town Meeting this year. We used the additional months to study some of the nuances of the application of RCV to Arlington elections in further detail and to debate and discuss some proposed amendments to our main motion. Our discussions gave us a deeper understanding of how it would be implemented and resulted in one substantive change to the motion: that the question of whether to adopt RCV for town elections, in addition to the required approval by the State, must appear before Arlington voters on the ballot for their approval, too.

The reasons why we favor adoption of RCV are the same as those articulated in our report to Special Town Meeting: (a) ensuring majoritarian election outcomes, (b) enabling more candidates to run by eliminating the threat of vote-splitting, (c) boosting voter turnout, (d) promoting diverse representation, (e) removing strategic voting incentives, and (f) fostering civil campaigns.

Thank you,
Greg Dennis
Clerk, Election Modernization Committee