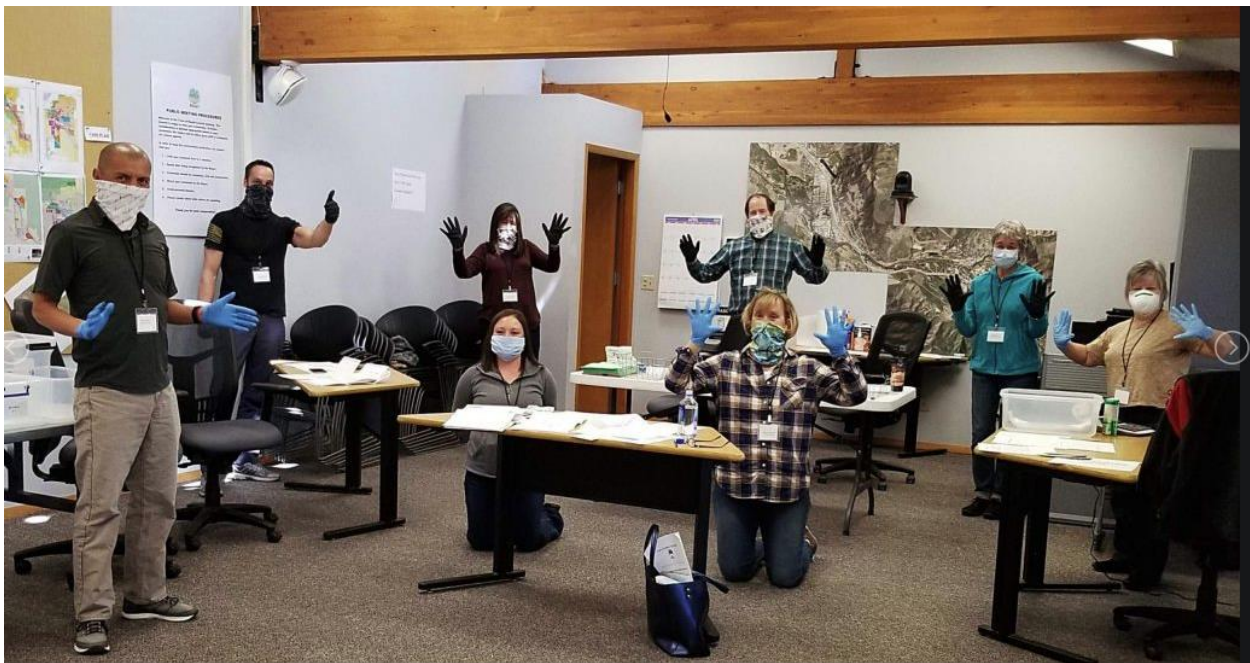


Basalt Voters have Higher Satisfaction with Ranked Choice Voting *Exit Survey Preliminary Analysis*

Release date: April 28, 2020

Basalt's first use of ranked choice voting in its April 7, 2020 mayoral election took place in the epicenter of Colorado's COVID-19 outbreak amid an emergency stay at home order. First and foremost, the team compiling this report would like to acknowledge the perseverance of the administrators and campaigns who did the work to keep democracy running in these challenging circumstances.



Town of Basalt Election Judges prepared for the April 7, 2020 hand-count

This preliminary report is an overview of results from a representative response exit survey conducted by Triton Polling as modeled upon studies of other ranked choice voting (RCV) municipalities by [St. Cloud State University](#) and [University of New Mexico](#). Respondents were 16.1% of the total number of mayoral race voters in Basalt. The purpose of this study is to document and understand Basalt's experience with ranked choice voting.

Ranked Choice History

Ranked choice voting has been in use in the USA for over 100 years. In the single-winner application it is also called "Instant Runoff Voting;" when the same method is used in multiple-winner races it is also called "Single Transferable Vote." The

scholarly literature has been using the voter-centered language “Ranked Choice Voting” for over 20 years. Sometimes legal language uses the older nomenclature to obviate other tally methods that use a similar ballot.

In 2002, the town charter for Basalt was amended to require Instant Runoff Voting for the mayoral race. This was done to identify a majority winner without the added cost and decreased turnout of a runoff election. Since adoption in 2002, 2020 was the first year to have more than two mayoral candidates.

Voter Education

Voter education was conducted by the Town of Basalt, the campaigns, and local news media. As ancillaries to the ballot itself, such materials alert the voters to the difference in the ballot and how they express their preference for mayor.

The town’s website had a link to the [mailed brochure](#) and a [video](#) explaining how the tally works. Local radio interviews reviewed how the ballot and tally work.

REGISTER TO VOTE
Most eligible individuals can now register, verify, and/or update their voter registration online at: GoVoteColorado.gov or at the County Clerk's Office in the County in which you reside.

VOTER ELIGIBILITY
To be eligible to vote in Basalt's Municipal Election, you must be a United States citizen, at least 18 years of age and have resided in the State of Colorado for at least 22 days before April 7, 2020.

MAIL BALLOTS
Ballots will be mailed between March 16 and March 23 to eligible voters at the address on their voter registration. To verify your current address, visit GoVoteColorado.gov. Voters wishing to receive their ballot at a different address should contact the Basalt Town Clerk at 101 Midland Avenue, Basalt, or by phone at (970) 927-4701 x 103.
Ballots must be received by the Town Clerk by 7 pm on Election Day. Postmarks do not count.
Ballots may be returned by mail or dropped at the 24/7 ballot drop box behind the Basalt Town Hall at 101 Midland Avenue, Basalt, up to 7 pm on Election Day.

BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE TOWN CLERK BY 7 PM ON ELECTION DAY

INSTRUCTIONS
To vote for the Town Council, follow the instructions on the ballot to completely fill in the oval next to your choices in blue or black ink. Do not vote for more than 3 candidates.
To vote for the Mayor, follow the instructions for Ranked Voting on the ballot to rank the candidates in order of preference.
Ranked Voting, or Instant Runoff Voting, means a method of casting and tabulating votes that allows electors to rank the candidates for an office in order of preference and uses these preferences to determine the winner of the election.

- To vote for the Mayor, you will mark your 1st choice in the 1st column. To indicate a 2nd choice, select a different candidate in the 2nd column. To indicate a 3rd choice, select a different candidate in the 3rd column.
- With a ball point pen, completely fill in the oval like this: ●
- Make only one choice per column, per row. Do not skip columns.
- You may rank as few candidates as you wish.

HOW TO MARK
INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTER:
Fill in the oval(s) to mark your choice(s) ●

MAYOR:
Vote only one choice per column, per row

MAYOR	VOTE 1ST CHOICE HERE	VOTE 2ND CHOICE HERE	VOTE 3RD CHOICE HERE
Thomas Jefferson	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Benjamin Franklin	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
John Adams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING
With the adoption of the Basalt Home Rule Charter in 2002, voters required the use of Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) for the office of mayor when more than 2 candidates qualify for the office.
Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) is a majority voting method. If any mayoral candidate receives a majority of all first-choice votes cast, then that candidate shall be elected as Mayor. If no candidate receives a majority of first-choice votes, then the IRV procedure is triggered, which simulates a series of runoff elections.
In accordance with this procedure, if no candidate receives a majority of first-choice votes, then the candidate with the least number of first-choice votes is defeated, and ballots for that candidate are recounted to the voters' next choice candidate.

BASALT AND IRV
This April 7, 2020 Municipal Election will be the first time that IRV will be implemented in Basalt since the adoption of IRV in the Town's Charter.

OTHER RESOURCES
Additional information on IRV and IRV ballots is available on the Town of Basalt website at www.basalt.net.
For more information, contact:
Town Clerk: pam.schilling@basalt.net
Phone: (970) 927-4701
In Person: Basalt Town Hall
101 Midland Avenue
Basalt, CO

Above: brochure mailed to registered voters.
Below: campaign endorsement with a ranking order

There was not a high-dollar effort that municipalities like Santa Fe and San Francisco have experienced. What occurred was that trusted leaders and the campaigns themselves incorporated voter education into their plan for success. Only 3 ballots (0.26%) were spoiled.

Bill Kane for Mayor
March 29 at 4:00 PM · 🌐

Of the three Basalt mayoral candidates, two stand out as having the political sensitivity, experience and vision to lead the town forward: Bill Kane and Rob Leavitt.

I support Bill Kane for mayor, with Leavitt as a close second. Voters should choose Kane first on the ballot and Leavitt second. That will help ensure that one of them ends up in the winner's circle.

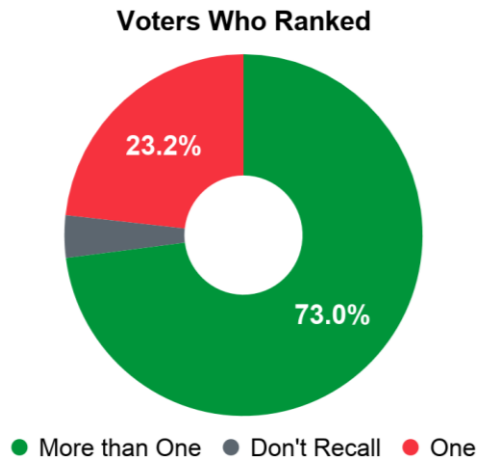
Both Bill Kane and Rob Leavitt have many years and hundreds of hours of involvement with Basalt schools, culture and the arts, as well as holding past official positions. Both have a balanced approach to key town issues such as small-town character, growth, affordable housing and business vitality.

They have the proven character and ability to build consensus to lead the town in the right direction.

– Bernie Grauer

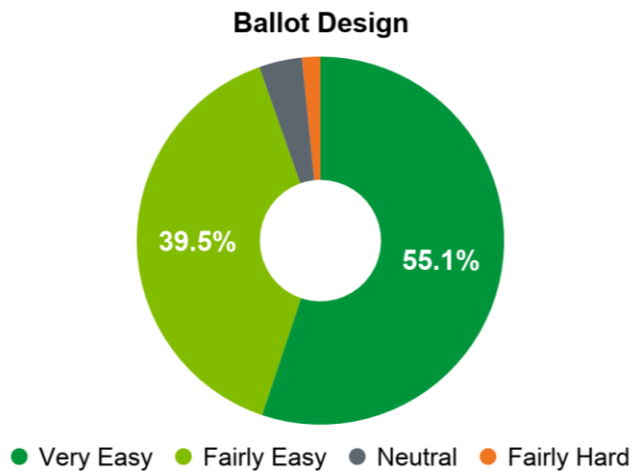
Use of the Ranked Choice Ballot

There were three candidates in the mayoral race, which in a pick-one plurality race would have run the risk of the winner being elected with less than a majority. Most voters took the opportunity to rank more than one candidate: 73% ranked more than one. Voters who either only liked one candidate or didn't see the benefit of ranking a second choice made up 23.2% of the Basalt voters. Those who did not recall how many they ranked were 3.8% of the group. This demonstrates that the voters are willing to take the opportunity to rank the candidates.



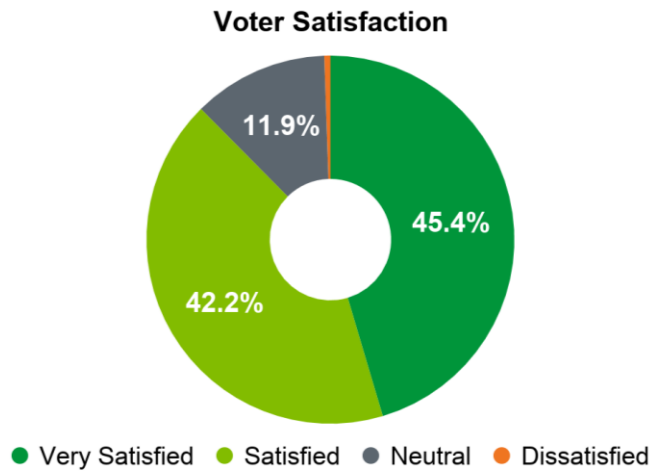
Easy to Use

Of the Basalt voters surveyed, 94.6% thought that the ballots were either very easy to use or fairly easy to use. The largest group - 55.1% said that filling out their ballots was very easy; 39.5% said it was fairly easy. 11.9% had a neutral experience. Only 0.5% said that filling out the ballot was somewhat hard; None of the voters polled indicated that filling out the ballot was very hard. The purpose of this metric is to determine if the ballot instructions and voter education resources were sufficient. These results show that they are.



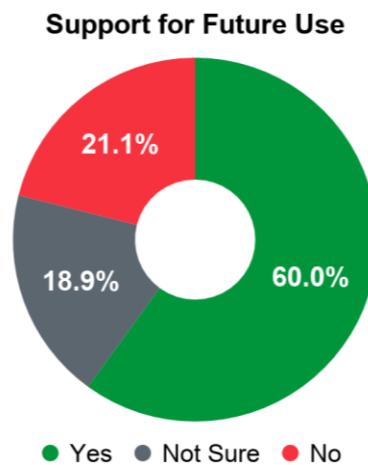
Satisfied Voters

Most voters were satisfied with their experience. Of the Basalt voters surveyed, **87.6%** were either very satisfied or satisfied with their voting experience: The largest group - 45.4% were very satisfied. The second largest group - 42.2% said they were satisfied with their experience. 11.9% had a neutral experience. Only 0.5% were somewhat dissatisfied; None of the voters polled reported that they were very dissatisfied.



Support for Future Use

Most voters support future use of RCV -- **60%** support use of ranked ballots in the future. Given that voters are usually resistant to changes in ballot style, this is a remarkably high number.



Methodology

The survey was conducted by telephone calls from Triton polling and responses correlated with demographic data. Calls were identified as coming from “Voter Preference Research Group.” Basalt had 185 respondents out of 1,151 votes cast. ([Source data.](#))

About RCV for Colorado Education Fund

The RCV for Colorado Education Fund is a nonpartisan 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to researching election reforms that give more voice to Colorado voters on election day. The Fund educates voters and campaigns, and shares best practices with election administration professionals. Funding for the Basalt survey was provided by a 2019 Accelerator Award from the National Association of Nonpartisan Reformers, Represent Us, and Unite America. Additional support was provided by grassroots donors.