



Measure #: 2026-054

TOWN COUNCIL MEASURE SUBMITTAL

Date: 2/9/2026

Submitted By: Town Manager

Telephone #: 508-699-0100

MEASURE DESCRIPTION:

Approval of Charter Amendment – Approval to change “Write In Candidates” Requirements

Signed: _____

Digitally signed by Michael D. Borg
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PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION:

This measure proposes an amendment to the Town Charter of the North Attleborough to establish a minimum vote threshold for write-in candidates equal to the number of nomination signatures required for a candidate to appear on the ballot.

Under current practice, candidates seeking ballot placement must demonstrate a baseline level of community support through the collection and certification of nomination signatures. Write-in candidates, however, may be elected without meeting a comparable threshold. This amendment seeks to align the standards for ballot candidates and write-in candidates by requiring a write-in candidate to receive at least the number of votes equal to the signature requirement for that office in order to be declared elected.

The purpose of this amendment is to ensure:

- Consistency in candidate qualification standards — Both ballot candidates and write-in candidates must demonstrate a similar minimum level of voter support.
- Election integrity and legitimacy — Requiring a defined vote threshold helps ensure that individuals elected through write-in campaigns have demonstrated meaningful community backing rather than prevailing through extremely low vote totals in low-turnout or uncontested situations.
- Clarity and predictability in election outcomes — Establishing a clear standard reduces ambiguity in determining when a write-in result reflects a legitimate electoral mandate.
- Fairness to declared candidates — Candidates who comply with nomination procedures should not be held to a higher threshold of demonstrated support than write-in candidates.

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SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: Review by the Town Attorney to confirm Charter amendment procedures.

ATTACHMENTS:

REFER TO SUB-COMMITTEE: Bylaw

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PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION CONTINUED:

This concept has been raised and discussed with the Town's Election Commissioners to ensure it is administratively workable and consistent with local election procedures. Their involvement helps confirm that the proposal is operationally feasible and supports orderly election administration. This amendment does not eliminate or restrict the ability of voters to cast write-in votes. Instead, it preserves the availability of write-in candidacy while ensuring that the level of demonstrated voter support required to win office is comparable to that required to qualify for ballot access.

The proposed change is procedural in nature and intended to strengthen confidence in the Town's electoral process by balancing open access with reasonable qualification standards.