

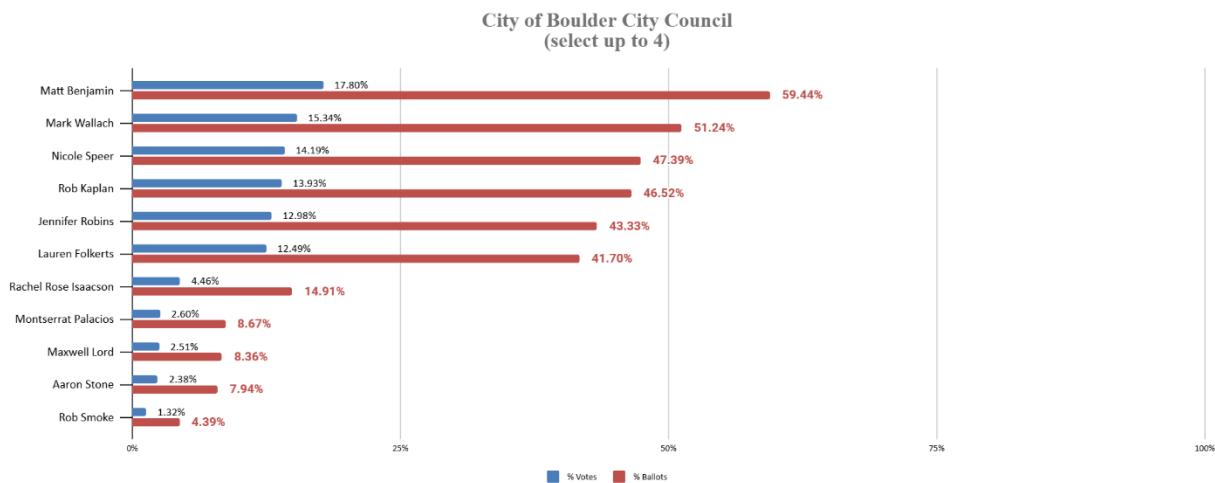
A Better Way to Report Multi-Winner Plurality Contest Results – 2025 Boulder County by Celeste Landry with graphs by Mark Parsons

The Voting Methods Team began highlighting a better way to report multi-winner plurality contest results in 2021 in our *Voter* newsletter, in the [Boulder Beat](#), and on [KGNU](#). Both Boulder and Lafayette hold multi-winner plurality contests to elect city council members; vote for up to 4 candidates and the top-4 vote-getters win

Our LWVBC Voting Methods position states, “Candidate vote counts in multi-winner plurality contests should be reported as a percent of ballots for better public understanding of support for candidates.” Colorado’s Election Night Reporting software misleadingly only reports percent of the total vote. And unfortunately, the county clerks typically don’t report crucial information (the number of ballots cast in each contest), until after certification, making it impossible to know the rate of undervotes or overvotes, or the average number of votes per ballot in council races, until after the audit.

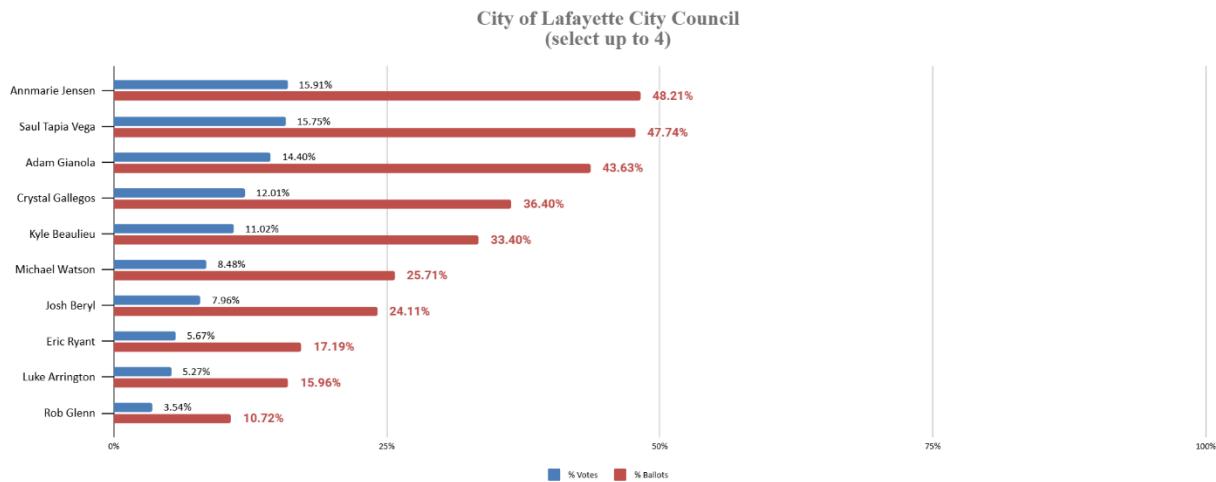
In the graphs below, blue indicates the current reporting (by percent of votes) and red indicates the reporting (by percent of ballots) recommended by our position.

The current reported percentage conveys some information – you can still determine the winners, for instance – but we believe showing the percentage of electorate support is much more valuable, especially since not every person votes for the maximum number of candidates. Noting that “59% of voters voted for this candidate,” which we know from the number of ballots cast, says more about what voters wanted than “this candidate received almost 18% of all votes.”



Like Tara Winer in 2023, Boulder council members Matt Benjamin and Mark Wallach were endorsed by multiple organizations. For the other two seats, those organizations tended to

exclusively endorse either the other two incumbents (Speer and Folkerts) or the most viable challengers (Kaplan and Robins).



The two Lafayette incumbents were reelected, as well as Annemarie Jensen and Adam Gianola. None of the candidates received support from a majority of the voters, but you don't know that until you see the percent of ballots (aka voters) that supported each candidate. Note that both Jensen and Tapia Vega got a higher percentage of the vote than Mark Wallach did in the Boulder contest, but Wallach received support from a majority of the voters!

[Lafayette mayor JD Mangat recently announced](#) that he would step down from council, effective December 2, with two years remaining in his council term. The Lafayette mayor is selected by council to serve a two-year term. In 2023 Boulder changed to direct election of the mayor using instant-runoff (ranked) voting. Every municipality in Boulder County has a weak mayor – strong city manager system.

Longmont also has a multi-winner contest every 4 years to elect 2 at-large council members, but Longmont has a small portion of its voters in Weld County; at last check, Weld County still hadn't posted the number of ballots cast by contest so we don't have the Longmont bar graph for you.

Longmont has a third at-large council member whose election is offset two years from the other two at-large council members. RCV for Longmont is advocating to combine the at-large contests and hold a 3-winner proportional ranked voting contest!

We hope that you'll come to our [Community Conversation on Proportional Representation](#) on Wednesday, January 14th, 7-8:30pm in the Longmont City Council Chambers, co-sponsored with RCV for Longmont. If you live in Boulder or Lafayette, please encourage your council members to attend also.