Northampton Multi-seat RCV options

In Northampton, most city offices, including Mayor and Ward Councilor, are elected in single-seat elections. The exceptions are the two-seat elections for At-Large City Councilor, At-Large School Committee, and At-Large Community Preservation; and the three-seat elections for Superintendents of the Smith's Agricultural School and Trustees Under the Will of Charles E. Forbes. The chart below covers four options as to how Northampton could choose to elect these multiseat offices:

Model	At-Large Plurality (no RCV)	Sequential RCV (aka "Majoritarian ")	RCV without surplus transfer (aka "Bottoms Up")	Proportional RCV with whole ballot transfer	Proportional RCV with fractional transfer
Current jurisdictions	Easthampton, Northampton (today)	Arlington, Utah cities	None, to our knowledge	Cambridge	Amherst, Minneapolis, Australia, Ireland, other cities & countries
Technical name	Block voting	Preferential block voting	Bottoms-Up Method	Single Transferable Vote via the "Cincinnati" method	Single Transferable Vote via the Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method (WIGM)
Same ranked ballot as single-seat elections	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dominion Software support	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Prevents vote-splitting	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Majority always wins at least half the seats	X	✓	X	✓	✓
No randomness in outcome	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Fair representation of voter diversity	X	X	X	✓	✓
Makes preliminary elections unnecessary	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Only whole numbers in tally	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Method of surplus transfer	None	None: a new tally is run from the beginning with the prior winners excluded	None: candidates who have already mathematically won continue to accrue votes as last-place finishers are eliminated	Cincinatti: when a candidate wins with S surplus votes and N total votes, take every S/Nth ballot from their pile and count it for its 2nd choice instead	WIGM: when a candidate wins with S surplus votes and N total votes, take an S/N fraction of every ballot and count it for its 2nd choice instead
Link to further reading	Wikipedia link	Wikipedia link	PRSA link	Robert Winters link	FairVote link
Comment	Easthampton opted not to use RCV for multiseat elections, not out of opposition to the idea, but because of time pressure they were facing to put their home rule petition together. They also were the only city that used plurality voting *without* preliminary elections, so they didn't have to apply it to multiseat offices to avoid preliminaries. The backers aim to add in multiseat elections using proportional RCV with fractional transfer soon.	Arlington was divided between sequential and proportional. A factor that helped tipped the scales to sequential was that the Select Board, the most prominent elected office in any town, is an *executive*, not a legislative office. Key proponents of the sequential model in Arlington said they would favor proportional if RCV were applied to a legislative office, like a city council, whose role puts a greater priority on incorporating the diversity of voter opinion.	This is a "semi-proportional" variant of RCV that has some limited historical use in South Australia. Because the outcomes can be quite erratic—bottoms-up can both underrepresent *and* overrepresent the majority—it's been replaced by fully proportional RCV everywhere it once existed.	The "Cincinnati" method was popular in the days before computer tabulation, and while it has the benefit that surplus transfer only involves whole numbers, it introduces a small element of randomness into the outcome and requires ballots be kept in the same order throughout. Although relatively minor downsides, they are frequent subjects of criticism. Robert Winters would prefer Cambridge move to fractional transfer—only inertia seems to prevent it.	STV with fractional transfer is widely considered the fairest way to elect multiseat offices because it reflects the diversity of voter opinion but without the random element of the Cincinnati method. It is also the easiest to implement, since it has out-of-the-box support by the Dominion software. (Sequential is supported but requires a few more steps to eliminate the prior winner and run a new election for each seat.)