

Saugus Charter Commission



May 5, 2009
Presentation to
The Saugus Board of
Selectmen

The Four Guiding Principles

1. Accountability



- *Officials: Required to take responsibility for their decisions and results of such decisions*
- *Citizens: Can hold public officials responsible for the decisions they make and impose consequences*

2. Transparency



- *Open meetings and process to the press and public*
- *Make all budgets, notices and financial statements consistently available for public review*
- *Ensure all laws, rules, and decisions are open for discussion*

Transparency results in less opportunity for officials to abuse the system for their own benefit

The Four Guiding Principles

3. Improving the Electoral Process

- *Increase consistency and clarity of government*
- *Reduce opportunity for candidates to be elected with a minority of votes*
- *Elections will be more competitive*



4. Accessibility

- *Improve the opportunity for citizens to access and communicate with elected officials as well as participate in Saugus town government*
- *Promote the government's desire to be accessed by the public*



Accountability



- **Voters elect officials yearly.**
- **Select board will set policy, evaluate the manager, serve as water and sewer commissioners, develop master plan, enforce the charter.**
- **Select board chair to serve as sixth non-voting member of school committee.**
- **Town Manager will be evaluated yearly.**
- **Town Manager must establish a process for employee performance review.**
- **Allotments by quarter.**
- **Monthly revenue reports.**
- **No spending in excess of appropriation.**
- **Required capital plan.**
- **Auditing function established and separated from executive branch.**
- **Mandatory 5 year charter review.**

Transparency



- **Application of conflict of interest law to Saugus legislature and elimination of conflicts on the licensing board.**
- **Town employees cannot hold office unless they take a leave of absence.**
- **No elected official, including members of the charter commission, can take a paid town job for one year after leaving office.**
- **Town job opportunities must be posted for public viewing.**
- **Charter document is integrated and harmonious. It is easy to follow for the citizen as well as elected and appointed officials.**
- **Website posting is required for hearings and decisions.**
- **Two required public forums and a “state of the town” address.**
- **Required “up front” budget meetings with elected officials who will set policy guidelines.**
- **Master and capital building planning will be done openly and collaboratively.**
- **Town Manager screening committee inclusive of community members.**

Electoral Process



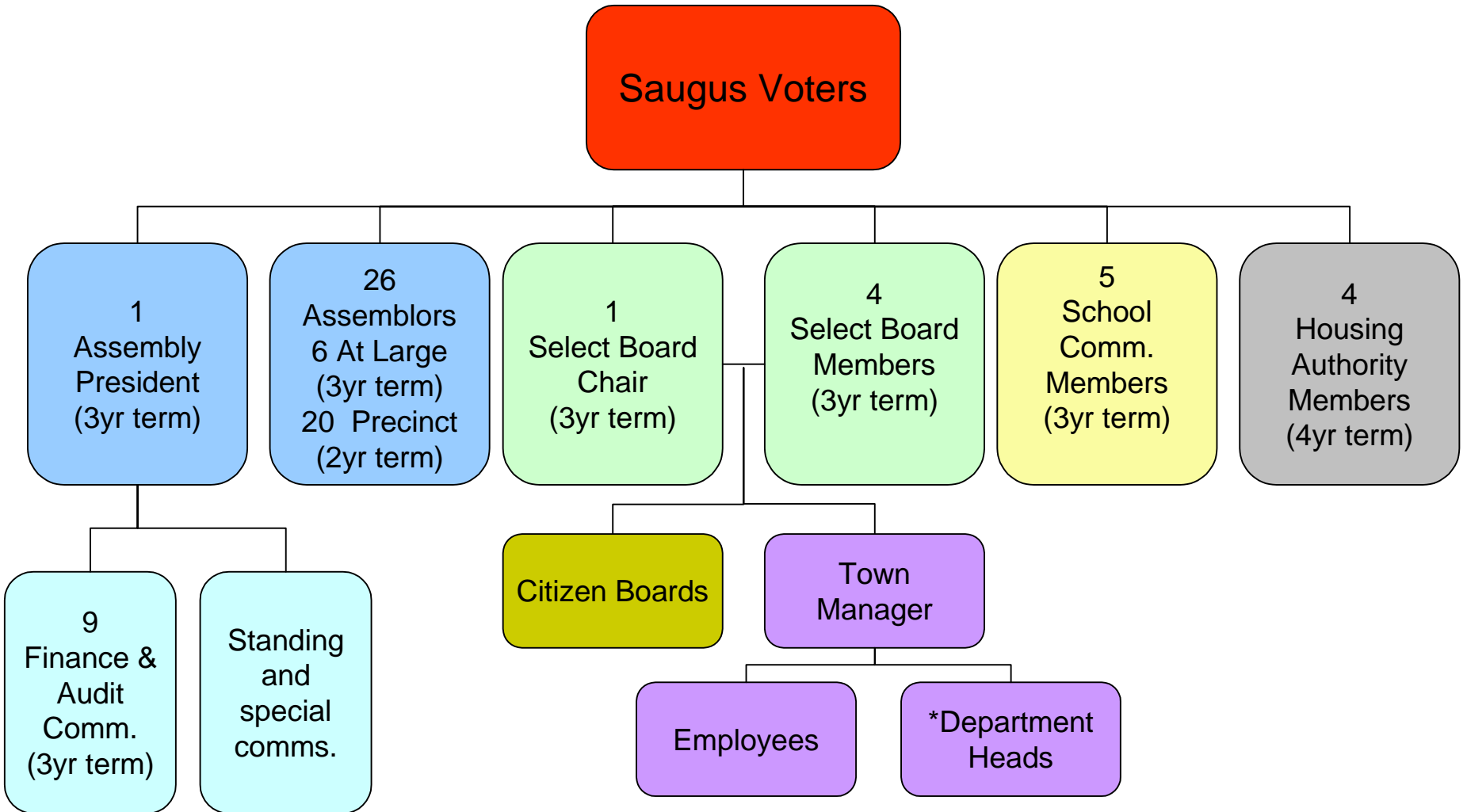
- Yearly spring staggered elections without disruption of school day.
- Citizen selected select board chairman. (one for three years)
- Citizen selected assembly president. (one for three years)
- “At large” assembly members. (six for three years)
- Precinct assemblors to run “one on one.” (20 for two years)
- Nomination signatures required for all incumbents.
 - Geographic distribution of nomination signatures for all at large seats.
- Recall of all elected officials permitted.
- All persons seeking re-election must obtain nomination signatures.
- All town election polling must be conducted from 7 AM to 8 PM.
 - Voters “in line” at 8 PM must be permitted to vote.

Accessibility



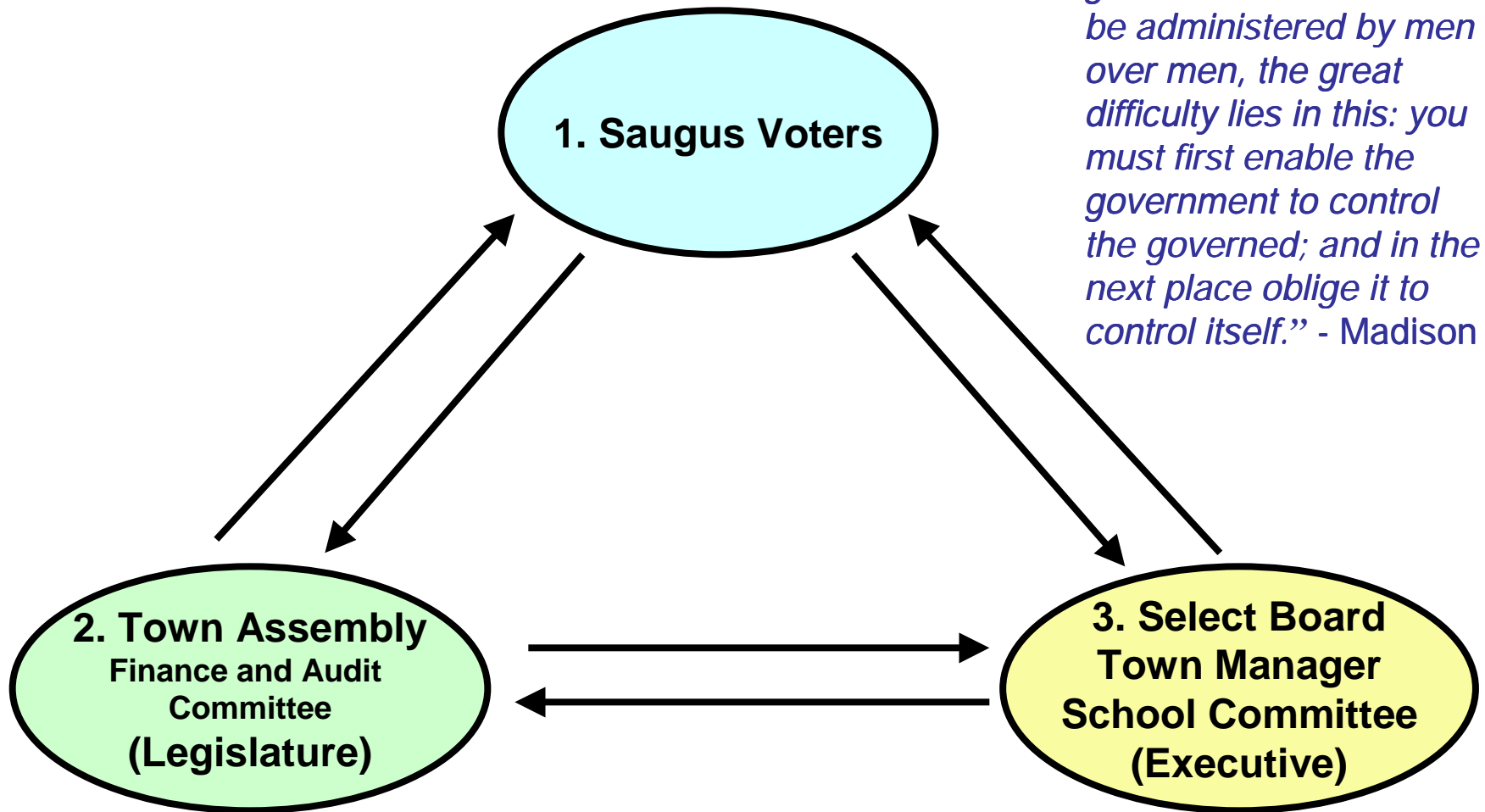
- **10 signatures to go before assembly at any time.**
- **50 signatures to guarantee a decision from the assembly.**
- **Decisions within 90 days rather than six months.**
- **Ability for citizens to initiate a ballot question.**
- **Citizens can also initiate a referendum.**
- **Guaranteed citizen input time at all public meetings of all elected and appointed bodies.**
- **Multiple opportunities to serve on legislative committees established by charter.**

Proposed governmental structure



* 3 confirmed by select board

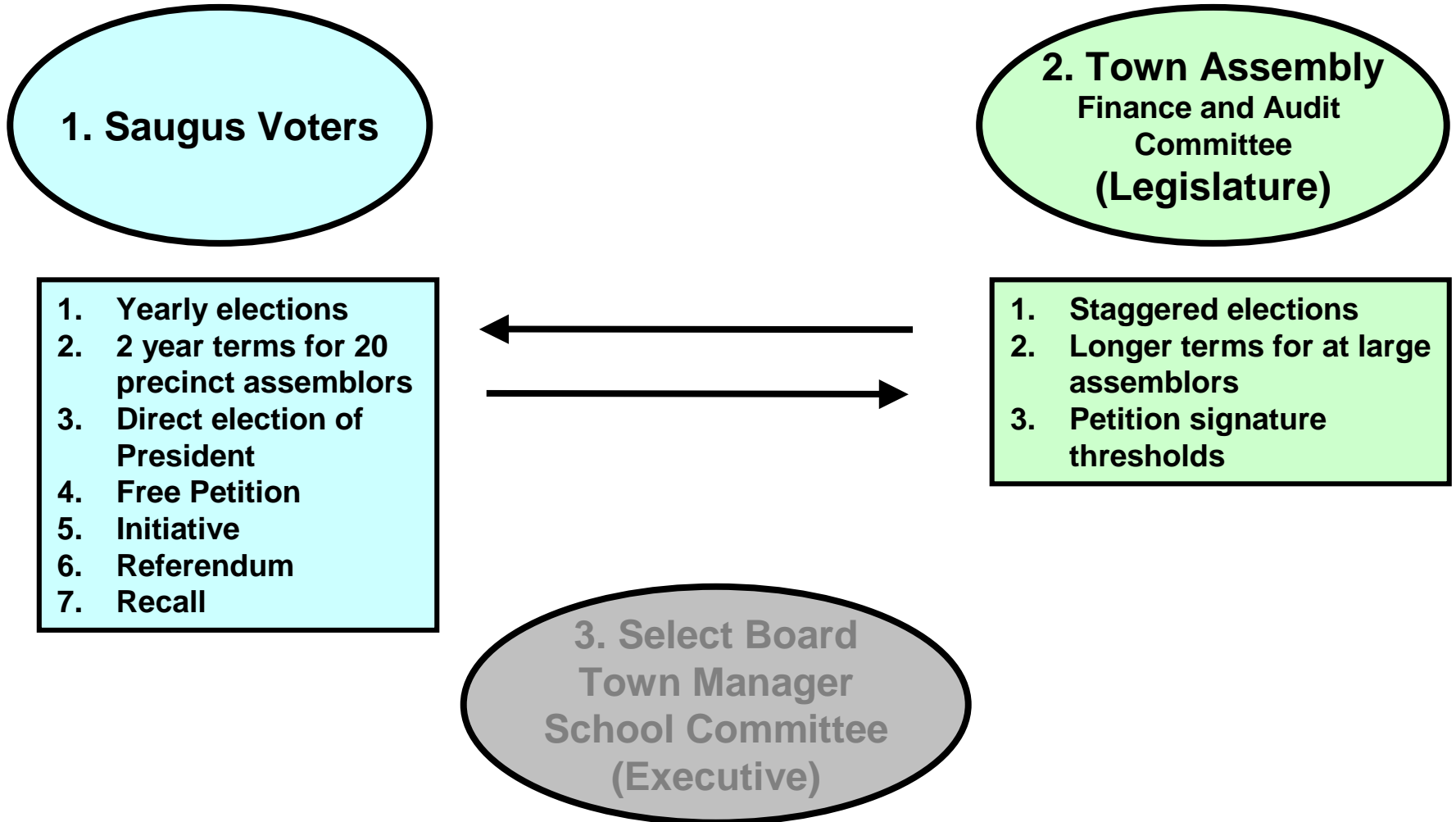
Checks and Balances



“In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.” - Madison

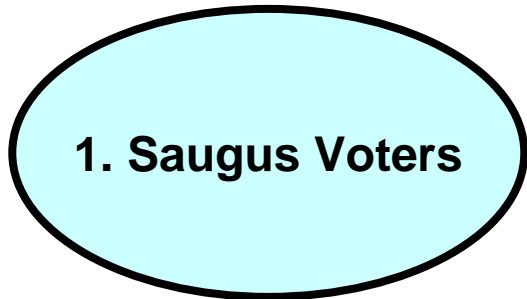
Checks and Balances

Voters – Legislature

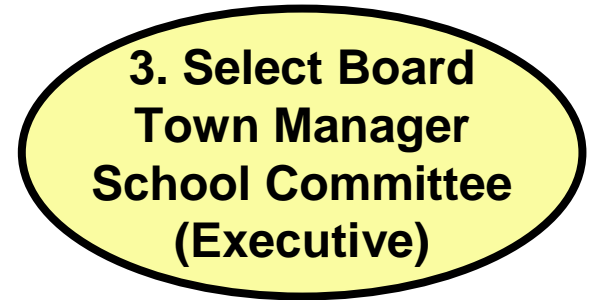


Checks and Balances

Voters – Executive



- 1. Yearly elections
- 2. Elect Select Chair
- 3. Recall
- 4. Input Rights
- 5. Information Rights



- 1. Staggered elections
- 2. Three year terms
- 3. Day to day management by an appointed town manager
- 4. Emergency Powers



Checks and Balances

Legislature - Executive

**2. Town Assembly
Finance and Audit
Committee
(Legislature)**

1. May adjust budget lines
2. Audit executive spending
3. Compel charter enforcement
4. May investigate executive branch
5. Must approve reorganization plans

**3. Select Board
Town Manager
School Committee
(Executive)**

1. Manager's budget is the main motion
2. School Committee can offer an amendment
3. Budget passes if no action by June 30th
4. Emergency authority
5. Non interference clause

1. Saugus Voters

