

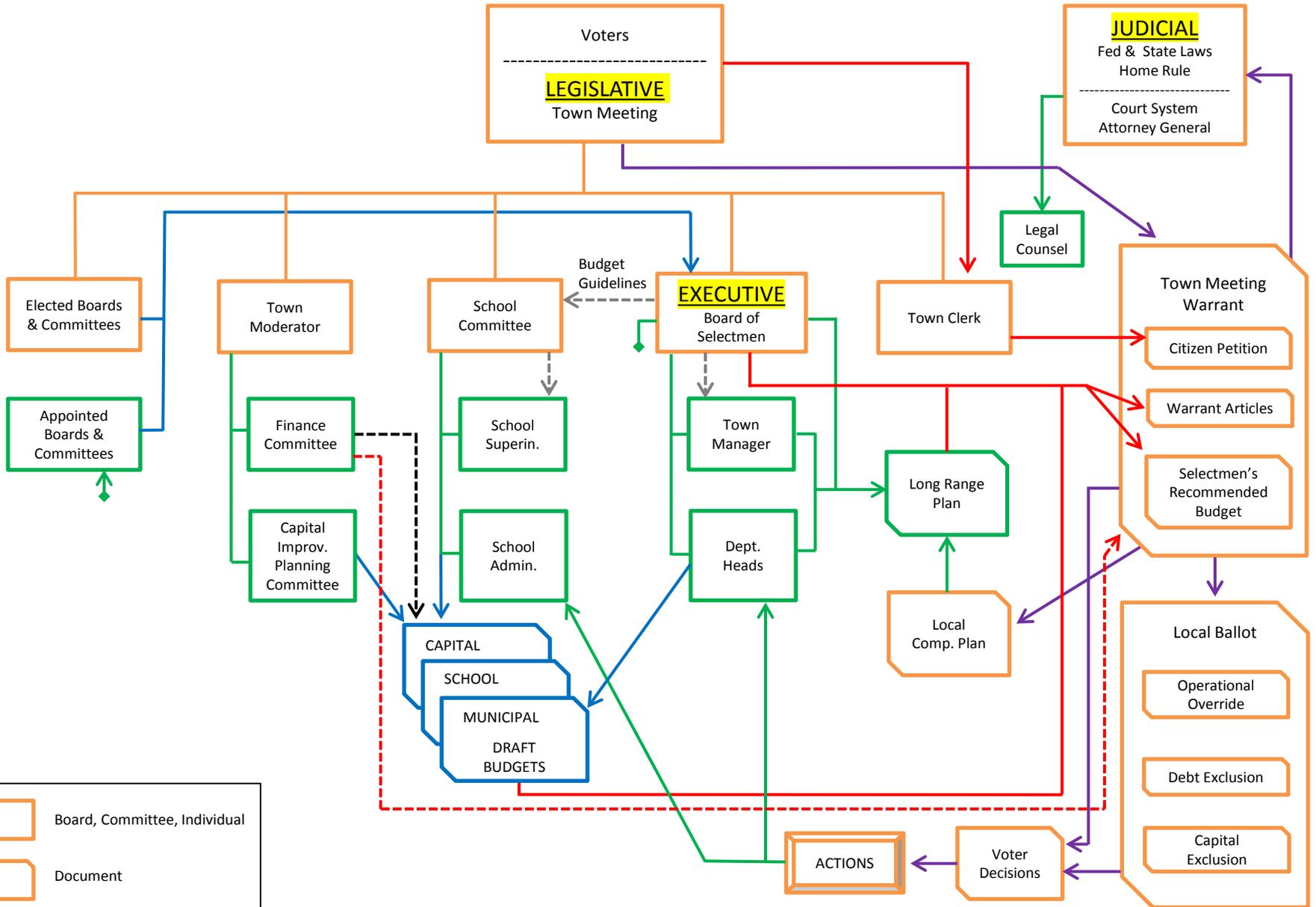


Town of Sandwich

Town Government

Process Map[©]

Town Government Process Map[®]



INTRODUCTION

- The figure on the first page is titled "Town Government Process Map". It is one of many possible visual representations of the process used to move from one Town Meeting to the next. It is not a proposal to do anything different.
- The most common maps are geographical. This map is not about real estate, it's about a process. A process is a series of steps taken over some period of time to get from one situation to another. Individuals use processes to tie their shoes, brush their teeth or set the table. Working from the outcome of the last Town Meeting to setting up the next is a bit more complex than setting the table. However, it is still a process with a series of steps taken over time.

ROLE OF THE VOTERS

- Perhaps the best place to start understanding the cycle is immediately following a Town Meeting and an election. The box at the top center represents the voters. Sandwich is democracy by participation. It is not a representative democracy. The voters who choose to participate are in charge.
- There are two terms that may need definition. The warrant is a listing of issues to be voted at Town Meeting. An article is a description of each issue expressed as a question that can be answered yes or no. The voters who come to Town Meeting vote on each article on the warrant. Those who go to the polls vote on the ballot. How the voters' decisions are acted on will be described later.

ELECTED STRUCTURE

- At the polls the voters also have an opportunity to reset the occupants of elected positions (boxes at the School Committee and Board of Selectmen level). Every three years the Town Clerk and Moderator come up for election. Each year there are either one or two places on the Board of Selectmen (BoS) and two or three School Committee (SC) positions at stake. There are always a number of positions on the town's eight elected boards.
- At Town Meeting and the polls the voters have hit the reset button. However, some things persist. The voters at Town Meeting retain the Legislative function. The Executive function remains with the Board of Selectment. Judicial oversight comes from the State Court's interpretation of the General Laws of the Commonwealth plus Home Rule legislation unique to Sandwich (box at the upper right). The Local Comprehensive Plan, as voted by Town Meeting, still sets the vision of the future.

MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT

- Now, the resources in place (boxes at the next level) implement the will of the voters. The Town Manager has a staff of Department Heads with responsibility for carrying out specific decisions. The School Superintendent has a staff responsible for operations related to education. The Finance Committee and Capital Improvement Planning Committee, appointed by the Town Moderator, have defined responsibilities. Each of the eighteen appointed boards or committees has a mission. The Long Range Plan is a management tool for assessing the needs of the Town. After Town Meeting the LRP needs revision taking into account the voters voice. And, we have some legal resources whose job is to see that we stay consistent with the law.

MACHINERY IN ACTION

- In the late fall the BoS is required to set budget guidelines for the Town Manager and School Committee. The Town Manager and School Superintendent and their respective staffs, in consultation with their elected oversight group, are required to submit draft budgets by February 1st. The Capital Improvement Planning Committee is tasked with providing a draft capital plan. The Finance Committee is charged with a line item review of those drafts (dotted lines from FinCom to budget drafts).
- Elected boards draft and submit potential warrant articles in their area of responsibility. For example, the Planning Board may bring forward zoning articles for Town Meeting approval (arrow from elected boards to BoS). The appointed boards have been doing the same thing. For example, the Community Preservation Committee may submit one or more potential articles. Maybe the School Committee wants to do some repairs that call for a warrant article. Or, maybe Public Works needs to improve a road and requires an easement.

ROLE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

- All those potential articles and the budget, both operating and capital, converge on the BoS. BoS decisions (arrow from BoS to warrant) generate the list of articles, the warrant, for the next Town Meeting. Those articles include the operating and capital budgets. When required by state law the BoS also places questions on the ballot. The Finance Committee makes independent recommendations to the voters at Town Meeting on all financial articles (arrow from FinCom to warrant).

CITIZEN PETITION

- Even the final form of the warrant is in the hands of the voters. Recently the elected Library Board of Trustees came to the BoS for an article allowing acceptance of a grant and the BoS said "no". The Trustees essentially appealed that decision to the voters and launched a petition. The signatures on the petition were certified by the Town Clerk and the article appeared on the warrant.
- At this point the warrant is issued, the ballots are printed and the cycle begins again with Town Meeting and an election.

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