

# Changing the City Charter

Presentation to the Common Council and People of the  
City of Poughkeepsie



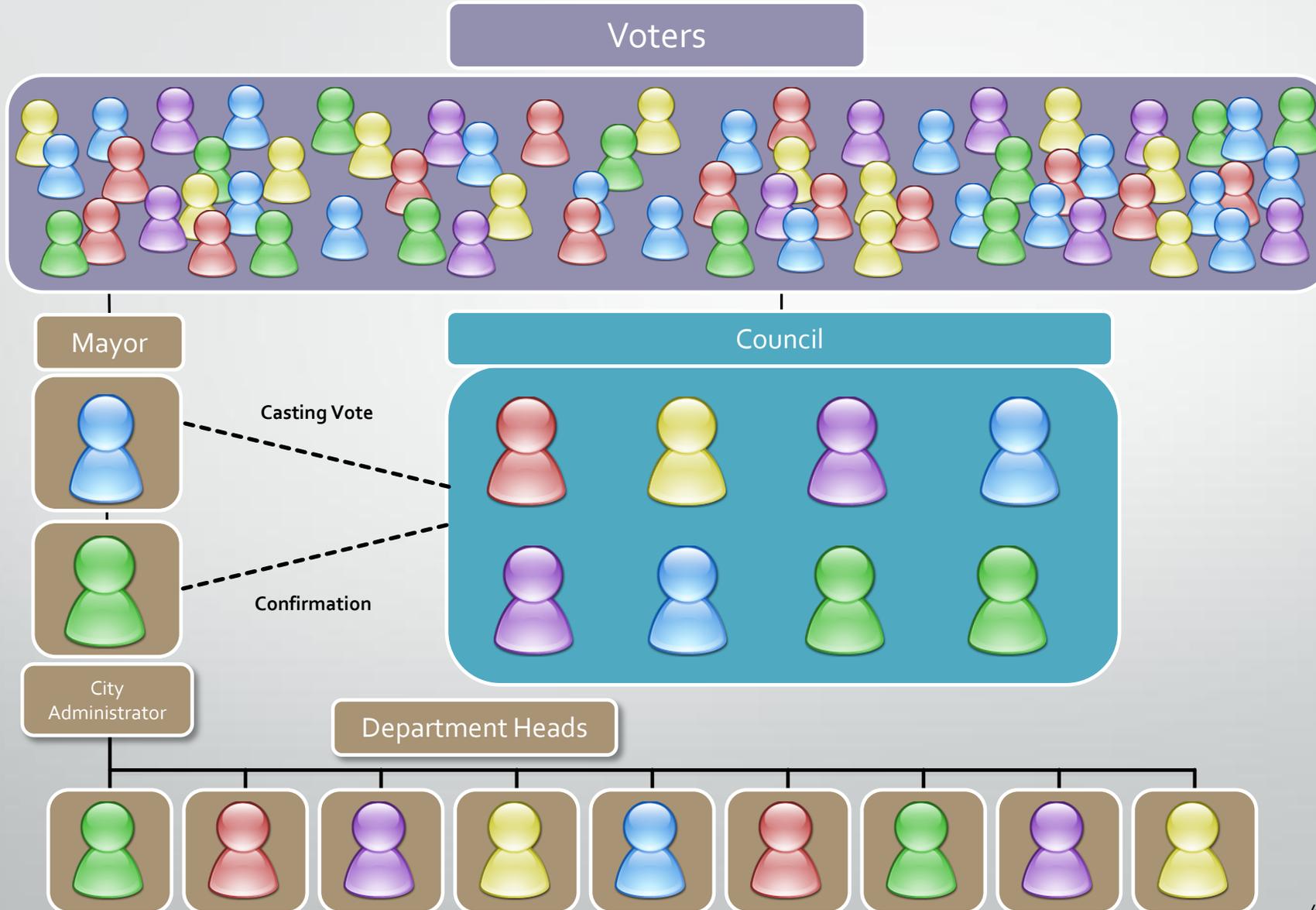
# Preliminary Charter Revisions

- This presentation will explain the preliminary decisions the Charter Review Commission has made, and to solicit feedback. Please feel free to contact any member of the Charter Review Commission, or Joshua Simons at the Benjamin Center: (845) 257-2901, [simonsj@newpaltz.edu](mailto:simonsj@newpaltz.edu), with any further questions or comments.

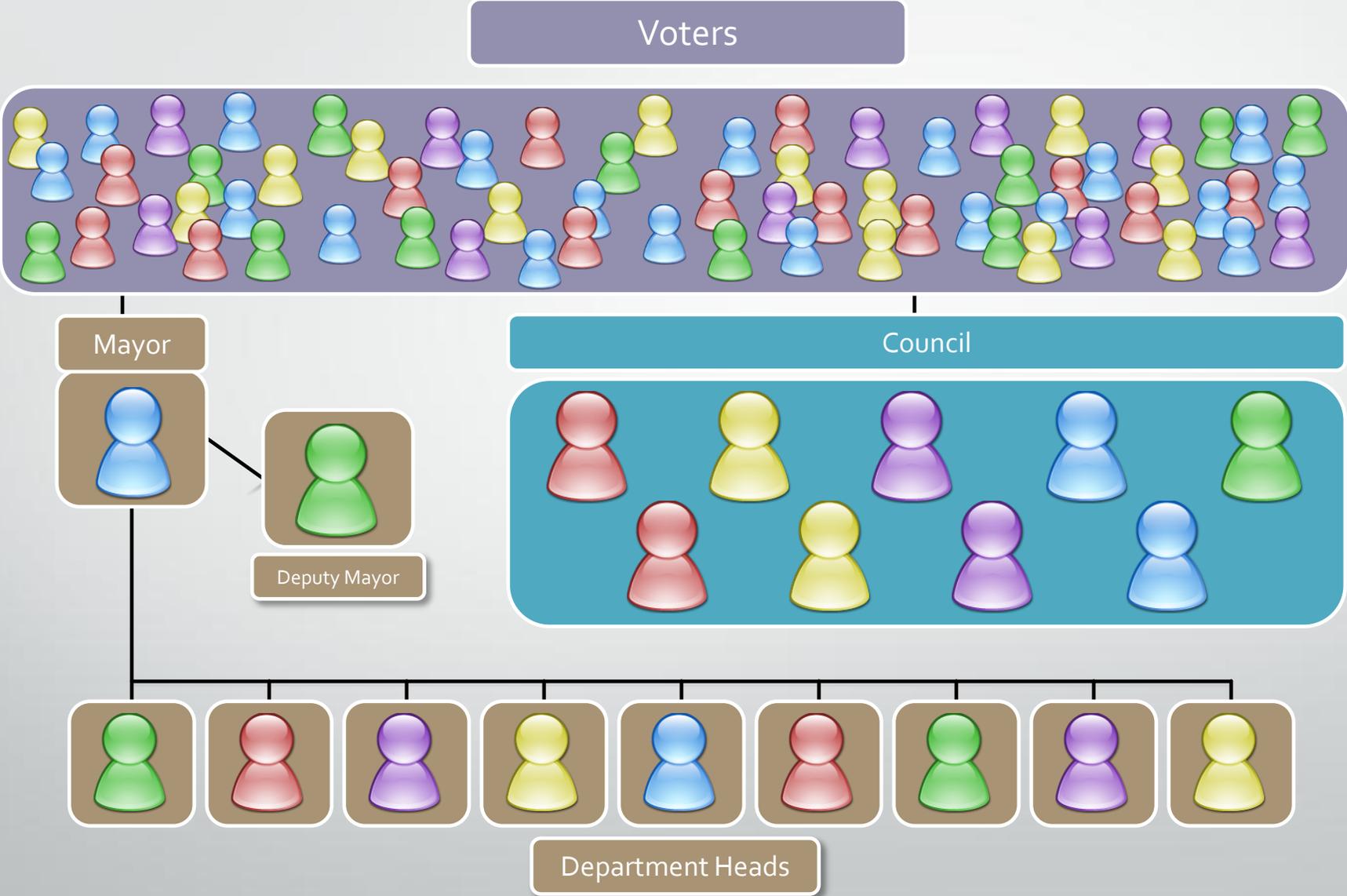
# Preliminary Charter Revisions

- The primary change is structural. It will change the City's government from a hybrid Mayor / Administrator system of government to Separation of Powers system of government, similar to our Federal Government. It will concentrate the executive powers with the mayor, and the legislative powers with the Council.

# Poughkeepsie's Current Hybrid System



# Proposed Separation of Powers System



# The Separation of Power System

- Modeled on national and state government
- Voters elect an executive, the mayor, and vest him or her with “executive” powers
- Voters elect a Council, and vest it with legislative powers
- Executive has no vote in the legislature
- System of “checks and balances”

# The Executive Branch

The Executive Branch of the City Government will be substantially the same as it is today. The Mayor will be in charge of the Executive Branch and is solely accountable for its performance. The City Administrator Position will be changed to a Deputy Mayor position. The Deputy Mayor will be appointed by the Mayor, and be a professionally qualified administrator.

## The Mayor

- Will be a full-time position with a full-time salary
- The Mayor will present a budget, and quarterly financial reports to the Council
- The State of the City Address will occur no later than March 31st
- The Mayor will have a line-item veto
- The Mayor will have the authority to call a special session of the Common Council for a specific purpose

## The Deputy Mayor

- Will be professionally qualified and appointed by the Mayor and serve at the Mayor's pleasure
- The Deputy Mayor will exercise the Mayor's authority at the Mayor's discretion
- The Deputy Mayor will serve in the temporary absence of the Mayor
- The length of time in which residency must be obtained after being appointed will increase from 90 days to 120 days

# The Legislative Branch

Because the Mayor will no longer have a casting vote on the City Council, it is preferable to have an odd number of City Council Members. In order to accomplish this, the Commission recommends the creation of a 9<sup>th</sup> At-Large member of the Council who will be elected by and represent the entire city, and will serve as the presiding officer of the Council. In addition to this:

## The Council

- Will have three primary functions:
  - Financial / Budgetary Responsibility
  - Passing Laws, Ordinance, and Resolutions
  - Oversight of the Executive Branch
- The veto override will be changed from  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the membership to  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the membership

## The At-Large Member of the Council

- Will:
  - Be the Presiding Officer
  - Have the power to constitute committees, including but not limited to a financial committee
  - Have the power to set the agenda of the Common Council
  - Receive a rate of pay 1.5 times that of the other council members.

# Both Branches

- **Salary Review Commission:** Every 4 years a commission will be created to review the salaries of the Mayor and Council members. The Mayor will appoint three people to the commission, the Council will appoint three people to the commission, and those six people will choose a seventh person. They will review the compensation for the Mayor and the Council, and make a recommendation to the Council.
- **Mandatory Training:** The Mayor and the Members of the Common Council will be required to take 16 hours of continuing training each year the nature of which will be determined by the Council. Failure to do so will result in a reduction of salary.

**Questions? Comments?**

