

Know your Sangguniang Bayan

THE Sangguniang Bayan is a forum where various sectors of society participate not only in local legislation but also in formulation of national policies. On the local level, the Sangguniang Bayan is composed of the members of the old municipal/city councils and provincial boards plus representatives of the youth, barangays, capitalist, professional and labor sectors. These enlarged local legislative bodies are called Sangguniang Pambayan (Municipal Sangguniang Bayan), Sangguniang Panlungsod (City Sangguniang Bayan), and Sangguniang Panlalawigan (Provincial Sangguniang Bayan).

The case of Metropolitan Manila is special. Its legislative body is the Metro Manila Commission whose members are a governor, a vice-governor, and three commissioners. The Metro Manila municipal and city Sangguniang Bayans can only recommend to the Commission such measures as they think are necessary.

On the regional level, the Sangguniang Bayan is composed of the members of all the Sangguniang Panlungsod and Sangguniang Pambayan in a region. The regional Sangguniang Bayan is called Pamook na Katipunan ng mga Sanggunian (PKS).

The national Sangguniang Bayan is composed of members of all provincial and city Sangguniang Bayan. This national body, called the Katipunan ng mga Sanggunian, was organized because of the necessity for the Sangguniang Bayan to include national issues in its deliberations.

A national legislative advisory council to be called the Sangguniang Pambansa shall be organized with the advice of the Katipunan ng mga Sanggunian. The council shall exercise the powers of advisory legislation and the President shall approve its recommendations. Its membership may include cabinet members and sectoral representatives.

The Bayan system is a milestone in the development of Philippine political processes, not only because it broadens citizen participation in government affairs but also because it identifies specifically the groups of interest in a typical Philippine unit, the barrio, now called the barangay.

Breakdown of Representation

1. **General Representation.** PD 824 did not abolish the provincial boards and city/municipal councils. It renamed them under the general term, "Sangguniang Bayan," and enlarged their respective memberships. The members of the pre-PD 825 boards and councils have been retained to represent the general populace in the local units. As stipulated by the Constitution's Transitory Provisions, they shall continue in office until they are removed by the President, or until their successors are chosen.

2. **Barangay Representation.** The barangays, citizens' assemblies with 100-500 families each, are the base for citizen participation in government affairs. The members elect barangay chairman and barangay youth leaders who in turn elect their representatives to the municipal or city Sangguniang Bayans. The interest of each neighborhood is thus represented in the Sangguniang Bayan.

3. **Sectoral Representation.** Capital, professional, and labor interests now have specific identities in municipal legislation. Formerly, no representative was officially designated to be responsible for a specific sector.

4. **Municipal Representation in the Provincial Legislative Body.** Before, the provincial boards could always legislate without consulting with the municipalities concerned. Now, with municipal representatives participating in the provincial Sangguniang Bayan, municipal interests can hardly be overlooked.

Powers and Privileges

THE local Sangguniang Bayans exercise the same powers and functions vested in the former provincial boards and municipal/city councils. They may therefore pass ordinances and enact measures that are deemed necessary. Moreover, certain powers of legislation not previously vested in local government units may be delegated to the Sangguniang Bayan, in line with the policy of enlarging local autonomy.

All members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, Panlungsod, and Pambayan are entitled to per diems and transportation allowances on a reimbursement basis for sessions and meetings actually attended.

Subject to the approval of the Department of Local Government and Community Development (DLGCD), each Sangguniang Bayan determines the amount of per diems and allowances to be given to its members.

For their services, members of the Sangguniang Bayan are not allowed to collect any other forms of remuneration or compensation such as salaries and representation allowances.

Composition of the Sanggunian

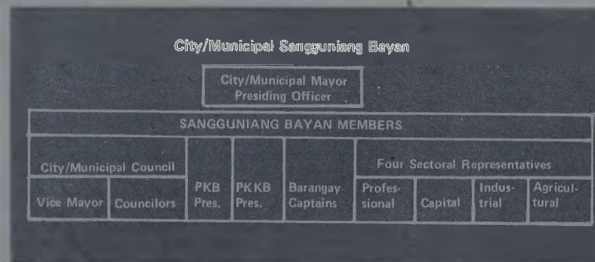
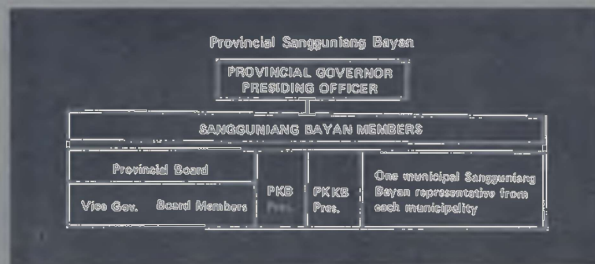
Sangguniang Pambayan. The total membership of the municipal Sangguniang Bayan is twice the number of members of the old municipal council including the vice-mayor. With the members of the old municipal council, the Sangguniang Pambayan includes: the president of the municipal barangay federation (Pambayang Katipunan ng mga Barangay); the president of the municipal kabataang barangay federation (Pambayang Katipunan ng mga Kabataang Barangay); four representatives from the professional, capital, industrial labor, and the agricultural labor sectors; and as many barangay captains in the municipality as may be necessary to complete the total number of members needed. The presiding officer is the municipal mayor.

The municipal barangay federation president and the municipal kabataang barangay federation president are elected by their respective federations. The sectoral representatives are chosen this way: the municipality's residents are grouped by a coordinator chosen by the provincial governor according to the sectors they belong to; the coordinator must not be a municipal official. From among themselves, the sectoral group members choose their respective representatives to the municipal Sangguniang Bayan. The barangay captains, for their part, choose from among themselves as many more representatives as are needed.

Sangguniang Panlungsod. The city Sangguniang Bayan has twice the number of members of the previous city council. The members of the city Sangguniang Bayan and their manner of selection parallels that of the municipal Sangguniang Bayan. The members are: the city mayor as presiding officer; the vice-mayor; the members of the old city council; the city barangay federation president; the city kabataang barangay federation president; the sectoral representatives; and the barangay captains.

Sangguniang Panlalawigan. The provincial Sangguniang Bayan consists of: the provincial governor as presiding officer; the vice-governor; the members of the old provincial board; the president of the provincial barangay federation (Panlalawigan Katipunan ng mga Barangay); the president of the provincial kabataang barangay federation (Panlalawigan Katipunan ng mga Kabataang Barangay); and one representative from each of the municipalities within the province.

The provincial barangay federation president and the provincial kabataang barangay federation president are elect-



ed by their respective federations. The municipal representatives are elected by and from among the members of each municipal Sangguniang Bayan, but the municipality from which the provincial barangay federation president comes does not send a representative to the Sangguniang Panlalawigan.

Meetings of the Sangguniang Bayan

To carry out its functions, the Sangguniang Bayan of a province, or a city, or a municipality meets either in a regular or a special session. Regular sessions are meetings conducted at specific times of the year. Special sessions are meetings called under special circumstances and for special purposes at any time of the year.

The number and frequency of regular or special sessions are determined by individual Sangguniang Bayans with the approval of the secretary of Local Government and Community Development. Unless impracticable, all sessions of the Sangguniang Bayan are open to the public.

Term of Office

THE term of office of the present members of the Sangguniang Bayan is interim in nature and temporary in duration. The President can revoke the appointment of any Sangguniang Bayan member upon the recommendation of the DLGCD secretary. Appointments of Sangguniang Bayan members may be renewed for any of the same grounds provided for by the Revised Administrative Code for the recall of members of the old provincial board and the municipal and city council, or upon the request of the Katipunan ng mga Sanggunian.

The President can also call a new election to replace or renew the present membership of the Sangguniang Bayan. After such an election, which will be supervised by the Commission on Elections, the term of office of all Sangguniang Bayan members will be specifically defined in a decree by the President.

The Pamook na Katipunan

THERE are thirteen regional Sangguniang Bayans since Metropolitan Manila is considered as one region. A PKS is composed of all the Sangguniang Panlungsod and Sangguniang Pambayan in the region. The governors, mayors, and presiding officers of the Sangguniang Bayans in each of the thirteen regions

are included as members of their respective PKS.

A PKS convenes at least once a year on a date set by its executive committee, or at the call of the President. Its executive committee consists of seven members: one governor or mayor; one barangay federation president; one kabataang barangay federation president; and four sectoral representatives. The executive committee's members are elected by and among the PKS members.

For every convention, a PKS elects officers headed by a temporary chairman. Their terms of office last only for the duration of the conference.

Each PKS has a permanent secretary, the staff support of which is provided by the DLGCD.

The Katipunan ng mga Sanggunian

THE members of the Katipunan ng mga Sanggunian, comprising all the Sangguniang Panlalawigan and Sangguniang Panlungsod in the entire country, elect from among themselves the members of an executive committee, which acts for and in behalf of the Katipunan when the latter is in convention.

At least once a year, the Katipunan meets in a convention, the date of which is set by the executive committee. The Katipunan may also convene at the instance of the President, as often as and for any purpose he deems necessary.

Convention Officers. At the start of every conference, the delegates elect a temporary chairman and other officers needed to conduct the convention. Their terms of office last only for the duration of the convention.

The chairman acts as presiding officer of the convention and automatically becomes an ex-officio member of the Katipunan ng mga Sanggunian executive committee. He retains his membership in the committee until a different chairman or presiding officer is elected in a new convention of the Katipunan.

National Secretariat. A National Secretariat, created under the DLGCD, assists the Katipunan ng mga Sanggunian. Headed by an executive director, it functions mainly as a channel of communications among the members of the Katipunan, a custodian of funds, documents and records of the Katipunan, and as liaison channel between the Katipunan and the general public. The staff support of the National Secretariat is provided for by the DLGCD. (U)