QUESTION AND ANSWERS MAY 2021 STM ARTICLE 12 & 13

Article 12 Appropriate for Planning Consulting Assistance

Article 13 Appropriate for Public Health Consulting Assistance

Question: Why does the FinCom urge rejection of consultant services for the Planning and Community Development Dept (Article 12), but urge passage of Article 13 for consultant services for Public Health?

Answer: The Finance Committee's recommendation on both articles were not unanimous, the vote to not adopt Article 12 - Appropriate for Planning Consulting Assistance was a vote of 4-5, not to adopt. The rationale for that vote was that the Planning and Community Development Department had received two prior appropriations, the last being approved in 2020 for $60,000. At the time of that approval, the Planning and Community Development Department indicated that the appropriated funds should last several years, however they were expended on one project and were spent within a year. Members of the Finance Committee felt that additional funds requested for special projects should either be requested during the annual budgeting process or through a reserve fund transfer.

In contrast, Article 13 - Appropriate for Public Health Consulting Assistance, the Board of Health was requesting these funds to hire scientific experts to evaluate emerging health issues for specific non-board of health related issues, such as the Eversource Energy Reliability project, which may have a public health implication. This was the first requested appropriation for funds such as these, and the expectation was that these funds would last several years. Again, there was lively debate on this warrant article, and some members of the Finance Committee felt that a reserve fund transfer would be more appropriate in these cases, however, in the end the Finance Committee voted to adopt this article by a vote of 5-3 in favor of the appropriation.