

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

ADMINISTRATIVE/BUDGET COMMITTEE

Hilton Baton Rouge Baton Rouge, Louisiana

January 30, 2023

VOTING MEMBERS

- 10 Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi
- 11 Phil Dyskow.....Florida
- 12 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- 13 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
- 14 Dakus Geeslin (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
- 15 Bob Gill.....Florida
- 16 Bob Shipp.....Alabama
- 17 C.J. Sweetman (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

- 20 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
- 21 Susan Boggs.....Alabama
- 22 Billy Broussard.....Louisiana
- 23 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- 24 Michael McDermott.....Mississippi
- 25 Tom Frazer.....Florida
- 26 Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana
- 27 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
- 28 Greg Stunz.....Texas
- 29 Troy Williamson.....Texas

STAFF

- 32 Assane Diagne.....Economist
- 33 Zeenatul Basher.....Coral and Habitat Biologist
- 34 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
- 35 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
- 36 Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist
- 37 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
- 38 Mary Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
- 39 Natasha Mendez-Ferrer.....Fishery Biologist
- 40 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
- 41 Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
- 42 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- 43 Charlotte Schiaffo....Administrative & Human Resources Assistant
- 44 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director
- 45 Carly Somerset.....Fisheries Outreach Specialist

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

- 48 Kerry Marhefka.....SAFMC

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PAGE 15: Motion that the council approve modifications to sections 4.8 and 4.8.1 of the council SOPPs. The motion carried on page 16.

PAGE 16: Motion that Anti-harassment training should be completed at the time of appointment or reappointment of council members, SSC members, and AP members. State directors and their designees should complete anti-harassment training every three years and at the time of appointment. The motion carried on page 18.

PAGE 19: Motion that the council approve modifications to the SOPPs as recommended by the LETC and proposed in Tab G, Number 4(c). The motion carried on page 19.

PAGE 25: Motion to recommend approval of the proposed EFH contract as presented. The motion carried on page 25.

PAGE 28: Motion that the council approve a \$5,000 increase in funding in 2023 for the state and commission liaison contracts. The motion carried on page 30.

PAGE 31: Motion that the council advertise to re-populate the CMP AP only. The motion carried on page 31.

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1 The Administrative/Budget Committee of the Gulf of Mexico
2 Fishery Management Council convened at The Hilton Baton Rouge in
3 Baton Rouge, Louisiana on Monday morning, January 30, 2023, and
4 was called to order by Chairman Joe Spraggins.
5

6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
7 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
8 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
9

10 **CHAIRMAN JOE SPRAGGINS:** I would like to call this committee to
11 order, and we have the members are myself, and Mr. Dyskow is the
12 vice chair, Mr. Donaldson, Dugas, Gill, McCawley, Geeslin, and
13 then Shipp. The first thing up on the agenda is Adoption of the
14 Agenda, and I would like to see if we could get a motion. Yes,
15 sir, Mr. Gill.
16

17 **MR. BOB GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could, I would
18 like to add an item for Other Business.
19

20 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Is it something we're working on,
21 Mr. Gill? Is it something that we're trying to solve?
22

23 **MR. GILL:** Not at the moment. It's something different, and the
24 title is Public Comment.
25

26 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. All right, and so can we add Public
27 Comment in Item VII, with Other Business? Any objections to
28 that? Okay. Can I get a motion to accept the agenda as
29 modified?
30

31 **MR. GILL:** So moved.
32

33 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Mr. Gill and Mr. Geeslin. All right. Any
34 opposed? All right. It passes. Approval of the August 2022
35 Minutes, could I get a motion, or is there any questions about
36 the August 2022 minutes? Could I get a motion to approve it?
37 We have a motion. Is there a second? Second by Mr. Dugas. All
38 right. Any questions? All in favor -- If you say anything --
39 If you're against it, say aye. Otherwise, it passes. All
40 right. Action Guide and Next Steps, and I'm going to turn it
41 over to Dr. Simmons.
42

43 **DISCUSSION OF MODIFICATIONS TO COUNCIL SOPPs**
44 **INTEGRATION OF HARASSMENT POLICIES**
45

46 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good
47 morning, everyone, and so my suggestion is that we take these
48 agenda-item-by-agenda-item, if that's okay, Mr. Chair, and so

1 we'll start with a discussion of modifications to the council
2 SOPPs.

3
4 We have two primary considerations for the council in the SOPPs
5 for changes. The first one deals with the antiharassment
6 policies, and so, during the October 2022 Council Coordination
7 Committee meeting, NOAA provided draft policies on
8 antiharassment for council employees and also process
9 participants, other than council employees, and they also
10 provided an opportunity for interactive training opportunities
11 for each of the regional councils.

12
13 It was recommended, during that meeting, that all councils
14 consider implementing these policies to address allegations of
15 harassment for process participants, which is what we're going
16 to focus on today, and a separate policy for council employees,
17 which will be in our handbook, and we'll be addressing that at a
18 later time.

19
20 What we're tried to do is take that final policy provided by
21 NOAA and try to integrate it, as best we could, into our SOPPs
22 for the committee's consideration, and so that's the first item
23 under the SOPPs.

24
25 The second item was discussed during the October 2022 council
26 meeting, and what it was was the Law Enforcement Technical
27 Committee got together, and they looked at the changes to the
28 fishing violations relative to the appointments for the advisory
29 panel meeting members, and they provided some feedback there
30 regarding the appeal process being different for federal versus
31 state, and so they've just provided some recommended changes
32 there to that in the SOPPs for consideration by the committee.
33 Mr. Chair, do you want me to go right into those two items?
34 Okay. Bernie, could you please pull up Tab G, Number 4(a)?

35
36 Folks have pointed out some typos and such, and so it's probably
37 best to pull up the Word version, so we can try to get those
38 addressed in committee today, if possible.

39
40 Again, this is for council process participants, which is
41 council members, SSC members, advisory panel members, AP
42 members, and it does not consider council staff, and it also, in
43 the periphery, talks, at the end, about the federal staff
44 members, and so what we tried to do is take our current -- It
45 said "General Antiharassment Policy", and you can see where we
46 have tried to weave in NOAA's draft policy to our SOPPs.

47
48 The blue is our proposed language, and then the red is struck

1 through, where we're making suggestions to change, and the black
2 is what is currently in the council SOPPs, and so if we could go
3 down some, please. It defines what "harassment" is, and it
4 talks about that it's everyone's responsibility, and then, if we
5 keep going down, it defines what the "council process
6 participant" is, and it provides links to our handbook for our
7 council employees. It talks about a reporting process and then
8 how we would respond and then what the agency's role is and then
9 the related processes.

10
11 We also put in here, in bold, just for consideration, so we
12 brought it to your attention, how often this training should be
13 taken, and we're assuming that it's going to be our
14 responsibility every year, or every other year, or at the time
15 of appointment, to come up with this training in the future, and
16 we don't know for sure if it will be provided by NOAA, and so we
17 are looking into that. We don't think it's going to be a
18 significant cost to the council, but we just need to kind of
19 make that decision and make sure that it's well-defined in the
20 SOPPs, and so, Mr. Chair, I will stop there and see if there's
21 some questions and feedback.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Does anybody have any corrections or
24 anything that might need to be made to this? Go ahead, Mr.
25 Gill.

26
27 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so I have one -- Well, I
28 have several recommendations, but the first one is, in the first
29 paragraph of 4.8, and I would suggest that that's a pretty
30 lengthy sentence, and that we put a period after "equality" and
31 start the second sentence with "Every individual".

32
33 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. I am trying to locate that. 4.8?

34
35 **MR. GILL:** Yes, sir.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** That whole sentence you're talking about,
38 the first one?

39
40 **MR. GILL:** Yes, sir, and just, equivalently, making it two
41 sentences, instead of one big, heavy sentence.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Any questions with that? Staff and
44 everybody, are you good? Okay. We can do that. Yes, sir.

45
46 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The other question I've
47 got, down on the third paragraph, in the second sentence, is we
48 talk about council members, including chairs and vice chairs,

1 and I assume, from the way that's written, although it's not
2 explicit, that that's referring to committee chairs, but it
3 doesn't say that specifically, and so it could be interpreted as
4 council chairs and vice chairs throughout time, and so I'm
5 looking for some clarification, and, if we're in agreement, that
6 we get that clarified as to what intent really is. Thank you,
7 Mr. Chairman.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Any questions on that? All right.
10 Is there any others? Dr. Simmons.

11
12 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I
13 think, because this was, again, a draft policy through NOAA that
14 we were trying to weave into our policy, I believe they were
15 trying to say all regional council chairs and vice chairs, and
16 so, if you want us to say committee chairs, I think that would
17 be slightly different than what the original intent was, but,
18 still, it's all the same that it's everyone's responsibility to
19 include this, and so we can reword it how you like, but I would
20 say, if there is a concern issue, a report, then the chair and
21 vice chair would have a lot more responsibility, with the
22 Executive Director, to report and determine how we're going to
23 respond.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Yes, sir, Mr. Gill.

26
27 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so I don't think it's a
28 big point, and depending on how it's worded, but I just wish it
29 was clarified as to what it really means, and I'm good either
30 way. You know, effectively, to me, chairs and vice chairs are
31 included in the council member side, and so it doesn't need to
32 be reiterated, but, if the intent is to have the chair and vice
33 chair position for this council, and I don't care about the
34 other ones, we ought to say council chair and vice chair, and
35 probably singular, right, and so that would be my suggestion on
36 how we modify that.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Dr. Simmons.

39
40 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Chair, I think that is a good
41 suggestion, and so let's make sure we get that where we're
42 saying council members, including council chair and vice chair,
43 and is that -- Hold positions of trust and responsibility, and
44 it is incumbent upon them, together with the Executive Director.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** All right. Any other -- Yes, sir.

47
48 **DR. C.J. SWEETMAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just kind of a

1 general question, and I'm thinking that maybe this could be
2 incorporated into Section 4.8.1, but I don't see anything in
3 here about confidentiality, or kind of a no-retaliation policy,
4 as it relates to this antiharassment policy, and I'm just
5 curious of the thoughts of the council, potentially, for
6 inclusion of something along those lines within that section.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Dr. Simmons.

9

10 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that
11 is a good point, and we did add -- If you go up to the 4.8
12 section, Bernie, that first paragraph, the council has a zero-
13 tolerance policy for harassment, and it will not tolerate
14 retaliation against those who report harassment, and then you're
15 saying, under the reporting section, we should say
16 confidentiality?

17

18 We did talk about that a little bit, on the planning calls with
19 this, and we generally would do that, as much as practicable,
20 but, if there is actually an investigation, it could -- We can
21 generally put it there.

22

23 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Okay. Thanks, Dr. Simmons.

24

25 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** All right. Is there anyone else? I do
26 have -- Yes.

27

28 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Can we make sure, Mr. Chair, that
29 we get that in the right place, and could we go down to the
30 reporting section? So "may confidentially report incidents",
31 and is that where we would put that, or do you have a specific
32 suggestion, or would you like us to come back at Full Council?

33

34 **DR. SWEETMAN:** No, and I think that could work, Dr. Simmons.

35

36 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Mara.

37

38 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Well, maybe we want to think about that for a
39 little bit, because, I mean, "may confidentially report", and, I
40 mean, if someone is going to report, at least lower down, it
41 says that the council has to tell the Regional Administrator,
42 right, and so, I mean, to that extent, it's not going to -- Like
43 you indicated, Carrie, it's not going to be confidential in the
44 sense that, if there's an obligation to notify others, or an
45 investigation, and it just sort of means that you won't
46 broadcast it, I guess, but we might want to think a little bit
47 more carefully about how to word that, so it doesn't give people
48 an unreasonable expectation, but also indicates kind of, you

1 know, what you're trying to say.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. All right. Anyone else? I do have
4 a couple of -- Go ahead, Mr. Gill.

5
6 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, General, and so, relative to Section
7 4.8.1, this refers to council process participants, which means
8 everybody who participates and not just council members and
9 council staff and AP members, SSC members, but also the general
10 public, and so those that are here physically, or virtually, and
11 they're part of that process, and they're a participant.

12
13 I mention that because, if I was sitting out in the audience, I
14 don't think that I would consider this applying to me, and it
15 does, the way it's written, or at least that's how I read it,
16 and I think we need to highlight that, for the record and for
17 the folks that are participating in this process. Thank you.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Any questions of that? All right.
20 I've got a couple of -- Go ahead, Dr. Simmons. I'm sorry. I
21 couldn't see you.

22
23 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I
24 think we're trying to get everyone as comfortable with this as
25 we can, and so could we -- Do you have suggested wording there,
26 because, if you go above the reporting section, it says that
27 council process participants include all individuals present
28 under the context of council business, regardless of location,
29 and meaning it could be virtual as well, whether at a council
30 office, at a council meeting, or at offsite meetings, hearings,
31 workshops, and outreach events sponsored by a council.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay.

34
35 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so I think the rewording
36 of that last sentence is good, but what I don't think is
37 recognized is that the public acknowledges that it applies to
38 them, and I'm not sure we can improve on it any, and I don't
39 have any improvement, but I just wanted to highlight that, you
40 know, they're involved too, even though they may not know it.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. All right. Once again, I've got a
43 couple of -- I've lost my point here, but a couple of small
44 things. Where it says, on page 2, the footnote to the first
45 sentence, I would like to delete the words that covers "a", and
46 we don't need "a harassment", and we need "harassment", and
47 then, also, in the footnote, to suggest deleting the word
48 "older", and there's a couple of us that don't like that, but

1 just delete the word "older age" and just put "age", or whatever
2 you want to put in there at that point.

3
4 Also, in page 2, the third paragraph, the second sentence of the
5 third paragraph, I think "process" should be capitalized there,
6 just in the way it is in the other parts of it. The same thing
7 goes for G-4(a)(i), with the same changes, and so -- Then, also,
8 on G-4(a)(i), page 2, the first full paragraph, the first
9 sentence, the second line, delete the word "to", and I don't
10 think we need the word "to" following "should". Dr. Simmons.

11
12 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can you slow
13 down just a little bit? You lost us, I believe, and so I think
14 this other policy was just the policy that was given to us by
15 NOAA, and so I don't think we should make any changes to that,
16 and I think we should try to focus on ours, which is in the Tab
17 G-4(a).

18
19 I guess, regarding deleting "older", I don't like it either,
20 because I'm older than forty, but that is actually how the class
21 is defined, and, since we're defining harassment here, I believe
22 that is somewhat of a legal definition, but I will defer to Mara
23 on that and how important that is to keep "older" in there, for
24 the definition.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** I mean, I don't consider these people at
27 forty old. Well, I mean, the only thing I was looking at,
28 really, and I will be honest with you, that this came straight
29 out of my lawyer, and that's where it came from, and so, if you
30 think we don't need it, take the age out. If we need to leave
31 the "older age" -- Dr. Simmons. Mara.

32
33 **MS. LEVY:** I am going to caveat this with I'm not an expert in
34 harassment law, but I believe that age-forty comes from the law,
35 and so, at forty and up, you're a protected class, essentially,
36 and so it is important to keep the "forty" in there.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Yes, and I understand the forty, but, I
39 mean, do we need to leave the word "older" in there?

40
41 **MS. LEVY:** I mean, if it's in NOAA's policy, I guess I would
42 just leave the verbiage the way they have it, because they
43 probably have it there for a particular reason.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Then one other note that we have in
46 the Footnote 2, and it's part of the second and third sentence
47 that's including Footnote 1 of G-4(a)(i), and it's not included
48 in the footnote for -- The last two sentences, and, if you go to

1 (a), to the first one, the first footnote, and I'm not finding
2 it, and I can't get it to come up on my computer.

3
4 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Chair, I think you're referring
5 to the one that we got from NOAA. Like I said, I'm not sure
6 that we need to make changes to that one, because we're just
7 taking what they gave us and deciding what we want to use and
8 what we don't want to use.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** I'm not sure what it is, and I can't find
11 it on my computer, and so I can't see what she's looking at, but
12 okay, and let's just scratch that, and we'll go with that. All
13 right. Any other questions? Yes, sir, Mr. Dugas.

14
15 **MR. J.D. DUGAS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. A question. In the
16 event that someone violates any of this, what's the
17 consequences?

18
19 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Dr. Simmons.

20
21 **DR. SIMMONS:** I'll take a shot at it, and so it depends on the
22 type of harassment and the type of allegation and whether it
23 needs to go directly to law enforcement. It might be an assault
24 or that kind of stuff, which is laid out in here, versus just a
25 verbal interaction.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Any other questions? Yes, sir,
28 Andy.

29
30 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** I guess a point of clarity. It says, "in
31 the NMFS role, any council that receives a report of harassment
32 against or by a council member must inform the NMFS Regional
33 Administrator". In the section above that, it says that the
34 response team will determine an appropriate follow-up, including
35 whether to engage the NMFS Regional Administrator, and so I'm
36 questioning whether or not that should be more definitive, in
37 terms of informing me, from the response team standpoint,
38 recognizing that the accusations could be broader than those
39 just coming in from a council member.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Dr. Simmons, do you have any --

42
43 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I think the difference there is
44 whether it's a council member, versus like an advisory panel
45 member or an SSC member or another public participant that may
46 be involved in the process, a consultant or something like that,
47 and so I think that's the difference. We could try to make that
48 more clear, if that causes consternation.

1
2 **MR. STRELCHECK:** No, and that's the way that I'm understanding
3 it. I guess, from having dealt with several harassment cases
4 over the years, there's a lot of resources available to the
5 council, within the National Marine Fisheries Service, right,
6 and so I would encourage you to report any form of harassment,
7 regardless of who it involves, and then we can provide those
8 resources to help you with that, and so I just want to be clear
9 there, and, you know, certainly it's up to you to decide, you
10 know, when you want to report it to me, but I think that would
11 be helpful, in these instances, to go ahead and report it, in
12 any case that you might have.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Any other questions on the policy?
15 Go ahead, sir.

16
17 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** I'm not on your committee, and so thank you,
18 but I just wanted to circle back to a comment, or a change, that
19 you wanted, General, and that was in Footnote Number 2, and I
20 don't think your deletion was fully captured.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay.

23
24 **MR. ANSON:** I think you wanted "covers" to be deleted as well.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Right, and I'm trying to read it, and I
27 can't -- For some reason, I can't get this thing to come up, and
28 she was talking about the last two sentences that was in
29 Footnote 1, and her statement was why are the second and third
30 sentences that are included in Footnote 1 of G-4(a)(i), below,
31 not included in the footnote?

32
33 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Bernie, can we delete "covers"?

34
35 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Mara, go ahead. Mara, did you have --

36
37 **MS. LEVY:** Well, just that I think that footnote -- "For the
38 purposes of this policy, harassment includes --"

39
40 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** All right. If I could it to pull up where
41 I could read it, it would be different. Okay.

42
43 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Is that language okay, Mr. Chair?
44 I don't know if we need a comma after "policy".

45
46 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** For the purposes of this policy --

47
48 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** There we go. My grammar people,

1 check me.
2
3 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** All right. If we don't take "older" out,
4 we need to take it the same spot there too, or we're going to be
5 older, and I don't care.
6
7 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Chair, does that reflect the
8 committee's feedback now, on the footnote?
9
10 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Any other questions? Do we need to
11 make a motion on this, to accept these changes?
12
13 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes, Mr. Chair. That would be
14 great, but, before we do that, we probably should have some
15 discussion about how often we would like to require any type of
16 training for council members and participants.
17
18 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Go ahead, Mr. Gill.
19
20 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I think that that should
21 be for new council members, as they come onboard, or are
22 reappointed, but no more frequently.
23
24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Okay. What about the state folks?
25
26 **MR. DAKUS GEESLIN:** Speaking from a state perspective, we're
27 required to take these on a biannual basis, and I think that
28 frequency is more than reasonable for this type of training for
29 this body.
30
31 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Yes, sir, Mr. Gill.
32
33 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** If we scroll down, it's written
34 above 4.8.1, in bold.
35
36 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Dr. Simmons.
37
38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so a
39 couple of things. We did have our SSC members take this
40 training. The chair and vice chair of the SSC took supervisory
41 training, just like we had the council chair and vice chair take
42 supervisory training, and our leadership took supervisory
43 training, and we did not require the advisory panels to take
44 this training. Other councils have required that, and so I
45 don't know how explicit we need to be here or if we just leave
46 it kind of open, so we can determine the type of training and
47 when we want to require it, but I think it would be good to have
48 a placeholder that defines it, Mr. Gill, if you want to move

1 forward with that, and then the same thing with the SSC. When
2 they're appointed, we could ask them to take training, and every
3 three years.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Mr. Gill.

6

7 **MR. GILL:** So, relative to Dakus' comment about the state, and
8 Florida apparently does it annually, and I assume that every
9 state does it on some kind of periodic basis, right, so that we
10 don't have to specify separately for state directors, and is
11 that correct?

12

13 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Dr. Simmons.

14

15 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** That is a council decision, and
16 that's up for debate, but we did ask our state directors and
17 designees to take the training, so that we were taking
18 consistent training.

19

20 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** You know, if I could make a comment, I
21 think that it's -- You know, I know that each one of our states
22 do something individually, and I understand that, but I think,
23 as a council here, we need to be one, and I would -- You know, I
24 think we need to have a way to where we do the same thing, as
25 far as our policy here, and, if we want to set it to once a
26 year, if we want to set it to whatever you think we need to be
27 at, that's fine, but I think that each one of us should do that,
28 as being a part of this, and it shows the unity of this council
29 of how we are following the policy of what we're doing. I would
30 suggest that, you know, if you think we need to do this once a
31 year, Dr. Simmons, and I think that would be a good idea, but is
32 that what you're looking at?

33

34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I guess that's what I'm asking you
35 all, but, if you don't want to take it once a year, we think, at
36 appointment time -- I think that's fine as well, but I would
37 prefer the state folks, and the designees, to take the same
38 training as the other council members, just so we have
39 consistency, and I'm sorry if it's duplication, but, like you
40 said, I feel that shows unity, and I think that would be helpful
41 when we get in leadership roles.

42

43 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Mr. Geeslin.

44

45 **MR. GEESLIN:** Dr. Simmons, do we know what the estimated cost of
46 this training is? Certainly there is a cost associated with so
47 many, X number, of people taking the training.

48

1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I do not know the cost of the
2 training. We have looked into it, and we think ADP can cover it
3 for a nominal cost, which we use for other training. I mean, if
4 we don't like this training, we can always look at other things.
5

6 **MR. GEESLIN:** I want to speak in support of the training and
7 state directors taking the same exact training, but I would
8 propose a one-every-two-year interval for the training.
9

10 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. You know, after I got thinking about
11 that more, maybe, you know, state directors, obviously, may not
12 be replaced every three years, like the other committee members
13 may, and that maybe we just do a set number that we can utilize
14 and say that, if you take it every so many years, that the state
15 director -- Also, that each committee member redo it when
16 they're reappointed or when they're appointed, and would that be
17 something we could look at?
18

19 All right, and I would like to put in a motion that the state
20 directors take it at least every three years, or when
21 reappointed, and, you know, a new state director is brought in,
22 or a representative, and each committee member take it at -- If
23 they're reappointed, they would take it at their reappointment,
24 or any new committee member coming in would take it at that
25 point. Mr. Gill.
26

27 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would suggest that we do
28 that as two separate motions, because there may be some
29 discussion and consideration of what the frequency ought to be
30 and how we go about it. **With that in mind, I move that we**
31 **approve Tab G, Number 4(a), as modified.**
32

33 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** All right. Let me see that. I am looking
34 for the modified.
35

36 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Chair, would it just be easier
37 to modify the language that's drafted, since we haven't actually
38 officially adopted this into our SOPPs?
39

40 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Mr. Gill.
41

42 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so that's one way to do
43 it, and I was thinking that, as a committee, we give the
44 tentative approval, and then we could bring back a modified
45 document at Full Council, effectively the same kind of thing.
46

47 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Do we have a second? All right.
48 We're moving on to something else then. All right, and so we

1 don't have a second to that, and so I guess it dies. All right.
2 Is there any other discussion on what we need to do with this?
3 I am looking at it, and I will tell you what, but I'm getting
4 confused now. Dr. Simmons.

5
6 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Chair, let me make sure that we
7 understand here, and so you're saying that you want to go ahead
8 and approve what we've proposed so far, but we're coming back
9 with additional clarification on the frequency of the training
10 for the Full Council to consider? Okay. Thanks.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Mr. Dugas.

13
14 **MR. DUGAS:** I was just going to ask to slow down a little bit,
15 so we can catch up, but I think Dr. Simmons did that, and I will
16 second it.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. The initial motion was seconded.
19 Any questions? **Any objection?** All right. **The motion carries.**
20 Mr. Gill, did you want to make a secondary motion?

21
22 **MR. GILL:** It's a primary motion, Mr. Chairman. **I move that**
23 **harassment training be performed on appointment or reappointment**
24 **for council members, SSC members, and AP members, and every two**
25 **years for state directors.** I probably missed something, Carrie,
26 and so if you could fill in the blanks.

27
28 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** **We probably need "antiharassment**
29 **training".**

30
31 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** All right. The only question I've got is,
32 when you say every two years as a state director, "or when a new
33 state director is appointed", and you might need to put that in
34 there. Every time a new governor comes in, we can always look
35 at that.

36
37 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Gill, one more time.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Mr. Gill.

40
41 **MR. GILL:** **On appointment or reappointment, and so one of the**
42 **"on appointment" can be deleted.**

43
44 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Have we got a second on appointment?

45
46 **MR. GILL:** **The reappointment of council members, SSC members, AP**
47 **members.** Did I miss somebody, Carrie?

48

1 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Did we get staff on the first part? Okay.
2
3 **MR. GILL:** Insert an "and" before "AP".
4
5 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** All right. Did you say two years or three
6 years? Two years is what you're asking for? If you could,
7 change that to two years, rather than three years, for the state
8 directors. My question is why do state directors take it more
9 often than the committee members, because they're three-year
10 appointments, right?
11
12 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Correct.
13
14 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** So could we change that to three and make
15 it coincide with the others? Okay. If you could move that to
16 three. Dr. Simmons.
17
18 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a
19 friendly suggestion, and so "antiharassment training should be
20 completed at the time of appointment or reappointment".
21
22 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** When you say, "at the time of", I mean --
23
24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** "Time of appointment or
25 reappointment".
26
27 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay.
28
29 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you.
30
31 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** All right. When you say though, are the
32 state directors part of it? You've got to put something in
33 there about a new state director, and so, instead of saying
34 "every three years or upon reappointment", and I guess that
35 "reappointment" wouldn't be that person, and it would be a new
36 state director, and is that correct? Yes.
37
38 **MR. GILL:** So how are folks like designees handled?
39
40 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Yes, ma'am.
41
42 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I will give it a shot, and so we
43 get a letter from the state, a designee letter, an official
44 designee letter, and so we could say "state directors, and their
45 designees, should complete this training at the time of
46 appointment" and remove "reappointment".
47
48 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Good. Just something to clarify

1 that. That keeps us in line, anyway. I like that with the
2 "designee" in there. All right. Is that it? Mr. Gill, do you
3 agree with that?
4

5 **MR. GILL:** I am good, Mr. Chairman.
6

7 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Can I get a second on this motion?
8

9 **MR. GEESLIN:** Second.
10

11 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** I've got a second. We're modifying here.
12 Hang on. Okay. Once again, we've got a motion and a second on
13 this one, as it stands, and is there any questions? Any
14 discussion? Yes, Mr. Gill.
15

16 **MR. GILL:** So this is for Dr. Simmons, and you just added the
17 "and prevention", because that's not mentioned in the policy
18 anywhere, and so why are we deviating from that?
19

20 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** We will take that out. I think
21 there was a little confusion with staff. Sorry about that.
22 Maybe, Mr. Chair, just read the motion, so everyone is clear.
23

24 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. We have a modified motion now. Is
25 that still good with you? All right. Is the second still good?
26 Okay. Any discussion? **If not, any opposed?** Mr. Gill.
27

28 **MR. GILL:** For the record, I think it would be good to read the
29 motion as it stands, for the record.
30

31 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Any questions? **The motion carries.**
32 All right. We got through that. Now where are we at? We're
33 back to the agenda items. I think, Dr. Simmons, we're back to
34 the final model fishery management council policy, and is --
35

36 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I think we're done with that
37 policy, and so staff will bring back some suggested track
38 changes, based on the motion, for Full Council, regarding the
39 frequency of training, and then, if we want to go to Tab G,
40 Number 4(b) and go through the LETC comments on the SOPPs, and
41 then that would complete our changes on sections to the SOPPs.
42

43 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Mr. Dugas.
44

45 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to make a
46 statement, before we move on, that, in my time on the council, I
47 haven't witnessed any harassment around this table, but surely
48 I've heard of some out in this room, and I think that's the

1 process participants, and so I just wanted to say that to the
2 public, that I think the issue lies more outside the room than
3 inside the room.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** I agree with you 100 percent, and I think
6 that, as a member of this council, it applies to you the whole
7 time, and that it's not implemented that it's just inside of
8 this room, but, at any time that you're representing this
9 council, that you are following this policy, and, Dr. Simmons, I
10 believe that we have a zero tolerance, right? That's been in
11 effect since day-one, but, yes, I do appreciate that. Okay, Dr.
12 Simmons. Would you like to go forward?

13
14 **CONSIDERATION OF FISHING VIOLATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LETC**

15
16 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes, and thank you, Mr. Chair.
17 Bernie, could we pull up Tab G, Number 4(b)? Okay, and so
18 you'll recall that our Law Enforcement Technical Committee met
19 in October of last year, and they took a look at the SOPPs, this
20 particular section of the SOPPs where we're talking about
21 fishing violations, and they made some recommendations there to
22 the SOPPs, pretty minor recommendations, but what they wanted to
23 make clear is the difference between the state and federal
24 written warnings process.

25
26 The federal written warning includes a process for contesting
27 the violation, an appeal process, but there's no due process for
28 the state written warnings, and so they asked that we make those
29 changes to the SOPPs.

30
31 Consistent with that, you can see -- You made a motion, in
32 October, for us to bring this back to the Admin/Budget
33 Committee, and so it's here before you, and you can see, in the
34 blue text, that is the suggestion that the technical committee
35 is asking to make to the SOPPs to reflect the difference in this
36 process for contesting the violation or the appeals process.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Any discussion? Yes, Mr. Gill.

39
40 **MR. GILL:** I assume we have to make a motion, and I make the
41 motion proffered by the LETC.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. We have a motion. Do we have a
44 second? It's seconded by Mr. Sweetman. Any questions? Any
45 issues? **Anyone against it? The motion carries.** Dr. Simmons.

46
47 **REVIEW AND APPROVE PROPOSED 2023 ACTIVITIES AND CONTRACT**

48

1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Okay, Mr. Chair, and so let's --
2 Can we go to Item Number V, and so we're going to review and
3 approve the proposed activities, and we have a draft contract
4 for you to consider.

5
6 Here, and we're going to go through some of the budget changes
7 as well, but we are looking at an essential fish habitat
8 contract, which we have a maximum amount of \$85,000 for the
9 committee's consideration, that we would like to make
10 competitive, to do some work, and I will go through that
11 contract, and then I have some proposed 2023 activities to get
12 the committee's feedback on for the final funded budget, which
13 we will bring back to the council at a later date, and so this
14 is just draft activities, draft budget, and a draft contract.
15 Could we go to -- We will start with Tab G, Number 5(a), please.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Yes, Dr. Simmons.

18
19 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** This will look very similar to what
20 you saw last year regarding the number of council meetings. As
21 was already discussed by Chairman Diaz, the big difference this
22 year is that we'll be hosting the Council Coordinating Committee
23 meeting in May and June. May is the larger meeting for us to
24 host, and that is in Key West this year, and then the fall one -
25 - We'll set the agenda, and NOAA typically sets up the hotel and
26 things like that for the fall meeting, and so we don't get any
27 additional funding for those meetings, and so that will -- You
28 will see an impact to the budget, and so that's the big change
29 that we have in 2023.

30
31 We are also happy to host a working group of the CCC, which is
32 the Communications Working Group, and we have that meeting set
33 up for February, and that's going to be in Clearwater, and then
34 that group, since they're meeting in-person, and they will have
35 a big agenda, will be reporting-out to the larger CCC in May.

36
37 You'll see on here that we have several trainings, and we
38 typically have a regional and national training for council
39 members, and we're anticipating new council members in August,
40 and then you will see the number of SSC meetings, and we're
41 trying to anticipate the number of special SSCs that we'll be
42 convening, and the dates we anticipate that.

43
44 If you go down to the advisory panels, we went ahead and planned
45 for two meetings of the Ad Hoc Red Snapper IFQ AP and Tilefish
46 AP. Again, we're not sure that we'll get that done, but we know
47 that we have several activities with the IFQ programs in the
48 coming year, and so we went ahead and planned for two meetings,

1 one for Coral, one for Data Collection, one for Mackerel, two
2 for Reef Fish, two for Shrimp, one for Spiny, and then some
3 other meetings that are unanticipated. What we've tried to do,
4 for planning purposes, is put some months in here when we think
5 we're going to plan those AP meetings, to try to give folks a
6 better heads-up.

7
8 Technical committees, we have three technical committees, and
9 we're anticipating convening them two times, and the Law
10 Enforcement Committee will be virtual in March and in-person in
11 October. We're also going to host a shrimp effort estimation
12 working group style workshop, and we'll have SSC members and
13 advisory panel members involved, and that will be in our office
14 in February, as well as, obviously, the Regional Office staff
15 and the Science Center staff.

16
17 This is a carryover of some working groups we had that were not
18 able to complete their work during COVID, and so this is an in-
19 person meeting, and it's an important meeting for us to get
20 ready for, with the red snapper review workshop coming up, as
21 well as many other stock assessments where this comes into play.

22
23 Summits and other meetings, we were tasked with looking at
24 research set-asides, and we're looking at doing two of those,
25 probably in April and August right now, and attendance of a
26 council member at the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel,
27 and that's typically the chair of the HMS Committee, and then,
28 this year, we are not going to attend the ICCAT meeting, the
29 International Commission meeting, and we're going to be
30 responsible for that in 2024, and the Mid-Atlantic Council is
31 going to do that this year.

32
33 For SEDAR, you can see that we have several meetings planned,
34 and some of them are webinars, and the big one is the red
35 snapper review workshop, and, right now, that's anticipated to
36 occur in late July or early August, based on the letter we
37 received from Dr. Porch, and we'll be working with the State of
38 Florida for the mutton snapper SEDAR 79 data workshop and review
39 workshop and assessment webinars.

40
41 Then we're probably a little bit ambitious here on the public
42 hearings, but we went ahead and planned to hold this many public
43 hearings. Whether we're able to accomplish all of these, we
44 shall see, but we've gone ahead and budgeted for them, and then,
45 under our outreach efforts, you will hear, in our Education and
46 Outreach Committee, that we're going to shift our efforts
47 towards more fishing clubs and speaking engagements, for that
48 committee to take a look at, and less tournaments, and so we'll

1 plan for one in each state, right now. Mr. Chair, we're looking
2 for feedback, if anybody has any suggestions.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Any questions on the -- Mr. Geeslin.

5
6 **MR. GEESLIN:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons. To your last point, you
7 said meetings in each of the states, and could you describe
8 that?

9
10 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes, sir, and so we have a plan
11 that we want to roll out to the Education and Outreach Committee
12 regarding these engagements and some feedback we got from the
13 Technical Committee, but, right now -- That can impact any
14 changes we make to our final budget, but, right now, Ms.
15 Somerset has a plan for us to walk through regarding what those
16 engagements will be, for that committee to provide feedback on
17 and then the Full Council.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Thank you.

20
21 **MR. GEESLIN:** In line with the placement of those meetings, has
22 there been any consideration for placing, or hosting, some of
23 the SSC and advisory panel meetings in the western Gulf?

24
25 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** We have received some feedback, and
26 especially I'm looking at the chair there of the SSC, Dr. Nance,
27 regarding trying to have an SSC meeting at a different location.
28 The thing is we've got to plan that way in advance, and, right
29 now, one of the problems we're having is hotels don't really
30 want to mess with this, with a government contract, and we're
31 having a little bit of an issue, because we want large spaces
32 for meeting rooms, and we want government rate for hotel rooms,
33 and so it sounds a little bit easier than it really is, plus the
34 cost of us taking all of our equipment, additional staff time to
35 set those up, and so we've talked about it, and discussed it,
36 but, right now, we don't have a plan for that. If you have a
37 suggestion, if you like us to bring something back with that to
38 Full Council, we certainly can, but it does add additional costs
39 and staff time to our budget.

40
41 **MR. GEESLIN:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons, and I certainly understand
42 the budget constraints and the costs associated with hosting
43 those meetings outside of the headquarters there. We would like
44 to see, from a state perspective in the western Gulf, maybe at
45 least one of those meetings, per year, out in the western Gulf,
46 and we would certainly be willing to think about budget
47 increases to facilitate those meetings.

1 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Dr. Simmons.
2
3 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
4 clarification, you mean one SSC meeting and any particular AP
5 meeting, or it just depends on the agenda items that you would
6 like us to consider?
7
8 **MR. GEESLIN:** Reef Fish would be ideal.
9
10 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Reef Fish.
11
12 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Mr. Chairman.
13
14 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** This is a question for Dr. Simmons. On the data
15 workshops, how many council members are you all budgeting to
16 attend those, and the reason I ask is, for council members that
17 haven't been to these data review workshops, it is a great
18 learning opportunity, and I think it's very worthwhile, for
19 folks that haven't been to them, to go, when we can budget for
20 it. Dr. Simmons.
21
22 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so you're
23 referring to like the mutton snapper data workshop? I think we
24 only have one council member budgeted for that, and I believe
25 two for the review workshop, but I might look to Ms. Hager.
26 She's saying yes.
27
28 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Any other discussion? Yes, sir, Mr.
29 Anson.
30
31 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** I'm not on your committee, and thanks for
32 allowing me to speak. Dr. Simmons, just a clarification on the
33 public hearings, and that's in-person, council staff in-person,
34 correct, all of those?
35
36 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes, sir, that is. We're going to
37 talk, during Data Collection, about what to do with the joint
38 amendment for electronic reporting, and what we would like to do
39 is a mailout there, and then a webinar, because we've had it in
40 front of so many of our advisory panels, but that's going to be
41 discussed by the Data Collection Committee.
42
43 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Is there any other discussion? Yes,
44 Mr. Strelcheck.
45
46 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Not to add to the list today, but we certainly,
47 I think, are seeing a need to have some more interactions with
48 the for-hire fishermen, with regard to the logbook program, and

1 I know that council staff played an important role in the
2 rollout outreach with that, and so I just mention that, and I
3 think it's a further discussion between you and I, Carrie, in
4 terms of opportunities there and what we could do more to work
5 directly with the for-hire industry on the logbook program.
6 Thanks.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Any other discussion? Do we need a
9 motion to accept this?

10
11 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Chair, I don't think we need a
12 motion, but just any feedback, by Full Council, is appreciated,
13 and you've given me quite a bit for the committee report and the
14 record. Thank you.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. All right. We're moving now to
17 5(b).

18
19 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Dr. Simmons.

22
23 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so staff
24 put together a draft scope of work with some project
25 deliverables, an anticipated contract period, and then a maximum
26 monetary request regarding our essential fish habitat work, and
27 so this has been presented, several times, to our SSCs, and
28 we've been trying to work on this with the Regional Office, but
29 we're just really not finding the staff resources to do what we
30 would like to do, and so you can see what we need to do, by law,
31 is we need to look at these descriptions and update them, as
32 best we can, but the SSC has provided quite a bit of feedback
33 regarding those different layers by life stage and asked us to
34 try to -- Tasked us with trying to get in touch with multiple
35 different agencies, state and federal agencies, to try to get
36 better data to inform those layers, and so that's what we're
37 trying to do here with this contract.

38
39 If you go to the second page, you can see the expected products
40 that we would like to see from the contractor, and we want to
41 make this a competitive process, if the committee and council
42 agree with us, moving forward with this type of work, and then I
43 will let Dr. Froeschke maybe see if he has any additional
44 information that he may want to provide on this proposed
45 contract.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Is there any discussion on this?
48 Yes, sir.

1
2 **DR. JOHN FROESCHKE:** I can provide a little bit more, if you
3 want.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Yes, sir.

6
7 **DR. FROESCHKE:** From this, as she mentioned, the way that
8 essential fish habitat works in the Gulf is, for each defined
9 habitat layer that we manage, and so you can think of these
10 things as SAV, submerged aquatic vegetation, which includes
11 seagrass, and then there's rock, hardbottom, reef, oyster, all
12 of those, and what we need are comprehensive maps, state-by-
13 state and federal waters, and so there's kind of a gathering
14 process.

15
16 There is a review and filtering, because, for example, there's
17 lots of different maps of seagrass. Some are old, some are
18 good, and some are duplicative. Some need to be vetted by the
19 states, to say, for your area, we have the local expertise, and,
20 you know, it's kind of a whole vetting process of putting that
21 together and getting the metadata into translatable format and
22 providing that so that can be incorporated into our management
23 document, and so that's the part that we need, and it's a fairly
24 tedious process that I think someone outside of us would be
25 better suited to handle.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Is there any other discussion on
28 this? If not, do we need a motion to accept this? Mr. Gill.

29
30 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. **I recommend that we approve**
31 **the proposed contract for EFH.**

32
33 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. We've got a motion. Do we have a
34 second? We have a second by Mr. Sweetman. Anything else? Any
35 other discussion on this? **Anyone opposed? If not, the motion**
36 **carries.** Okay. Now let's see where we're at here. I think we
37 are down to the draft budget, and is that correct, Dr. Simmons?

38
39 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes, Mr. Chair, and Ms. Hager is
40 going to through that and the action guide.

41
42 **DRAFT 2023 BUDGET**

43
44 **MS. BETH HAGER:** In Agenda Item Number V, this is informational
45 and for feedback, and we're looking for some input from the
46 council. We're going to provide the 2023 budget, and the
47 committee can ask questions, of course, regarding the current
48 cost projections.

1
2 The 2023 draft budget also considers increasing the Gulf state
3 and commission funds by an additional \$5,000 in 2023, for up to
4 a total of \$50,000 to each of the Gulf states and the
5 commission. If the committee agrees with the proposal of this
6 \$5,000 increase in liaison funds, then a motion would be
7 necessary for that. No motion is needed, at this time, to
8 approve the 2023 budget, because the council has not received
9 the total funding, and so we will bring the funded budget back
10 later for you all's review and approval.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay.

13
14 **MS. HAGER:** We will turn to the agenda item, the budget, and so
15 we're showing the 2022 budget here, alongside the 2023 estimate.
16 The figures are rounded to thousands, as we normally do, and,
17 although we have received a portion of our 2023 funding, of
18 course, as I mentioned, this is just going to be based on
19 planned activity and not necessarily hitting our total amount.

20
21 Now, we are entering the fourth year of our five-year award, and
22 so I wanted to update you all on the total funds received and
23 obligated to-date. Bernie, could you scroll down to the bottom
24 of this? At the very bottom of the budget that we're showing on
25 here is our cumulative carryforward, and we have everything
26 that's been funded and obligated, and the obligated costs are
27 including the contracts that we've already committed for
28 conducting the expanded sampling and ageing study on the Gulf of
29 Mexico gray triggerfish and the expanded sampling of the fleet
30 for effort monitoring in the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry.

31
32 The total uncommitted funds that we're currently carrying
33 forward from the first three years is \$730,000, and, last year,
34 we came very close to using everything, and we only carried
35 \$27,000 from last year forward.

36
37 If we go back up to the top, we can go through some of the
38 significant changes, where we have large fluctuations, and this
39 is in our key normal areas of travel, personnel, and contractual
40 costs. Dr. Simmons reviewed for you all the proposed
41 activities, and, of course, it includes hosting the CCC meeting,
42 and that's on top of our normally ambitious meeting schedule,
43 and so, right now, we do have a full \$70,000 increase in just
44 the travel lines, and, of course, you will see an increase in
45 the council personnel costs too and the staff salaries, and
46 those are related to COLA and for council salary activity, and
47 so that's also been gauged for activity that we have projected.

48

1 Also, we need to keep in mind that, because the post-pandemic
2 travel costs have risen very steeply, sometimes virtual
3 participation is an option, and I expect these travel lines to
4 be adjusted when we bring back the final iteration of the budget
5 to you all, and so we can go into a lot of depth at that point.
6 At this point, we are really looking at estimates.

7
8 In calculating the staff costs, another thing to consider here
9 is we've included the potential to either rehire the
10 administrative position that's going to be open at the end of
11 next week or the consideration of hiring the additional
12 technical staff person that we originally requested in our five-
13 year award. The calculations for possibly filling one of these
14 positions were only included for the last quarter of the year,
15 and these may need to be reduced out of the final funded budget,
16 depending on our funding availability.

17
18 If we scroll down a little bit, to contractual services, that
19 includes the \$85,000 that we just talked about for the EFH
20 contract, and it also includes the \$5,000 for each state and
21 commission, to help them offset the costs that are currently
22 exceeding their contracted amount, for some states.

23
24 We have some states that don't exceed them, but we also have the
25 update to the contract, this year, that allows them to hopefully
26 help when they send uniformed officers to our meetings. We're
27 having them be allowed to charge those costs,

28
29 Normally, in this contractual line also, it includes
30 professional and contracted costs, like transcription, audit
31 costs, payroll processing costs, IT, website technical work,
32 liability insurance, general auto liability insurance, and
33 software licensing, and none of those have a significant change,
34 except for the insurance, our general liability insurance, and
35 we're in Florida, and it's going up, and so pretty much
36 everything else is very close to our normal line.

37
38 We also may, when bring this back to the council, look at a
39 change in the line for our rent. Our building has just recently
40 -- It's in the process of being sold, and we may be looking to
41 have to move our office, because they are considering
42 redeveloping the site, and so that could be a significant change
43 when we bring the budget back to you all later in the year.
44 That's all I have right now, and does anybody have any questions
45 about this pages?

46
47 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Are there any questions on the proposed
48 budget? Mr. Gill.

1
2 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Beth, for that breakdown. Could you
3 refresh my memory on what the amount that we pay the states and
4 the commission to help cover some of their costs are? Is it
5 \$30,000?
6

7 **MS. HAGER:** Normally, we pay \$45,000, and that's our standard
8 contract, and, usually, at the end of our five-year award, we
9 have historically tried to create an additional amount there to
10 offset cumulatively, or if there's a special project or
11 something like that going on, and so that has happened
12 frequently, and so, each year individually though, it's \$45,000,
13 and, like I said, some states do regularly exceed that, you
14 know, in the things that -- In the activities that they're
15 incurring and dealing with on our behalf.
16

17 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so I move that we
18 approve the increase to the states and the commission in the
19 amount of \$5,000 a year.
20

21 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Do we -- Yes, Mr. Chairman.
22

23 **MR. DIAZ:** I guess I can wait and see if you get a second, but I
24 do have a comment.
25

26 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. All right. Do we have a second on
27 that motion? We have a second. Any discussion?
28

29 **MR. DIAZ:** I've got a question, and this is either for Dr.
30 Simmons or Beth. I had a conversation with Dr. Simmons,
31 sometime back, and so, being as the council office is located in
32 the State of Florida, the State of Florida does send a lot more
33 law enforcement help for SSC meetings and AP meetings, and
34 there's a lot more public meetings that they are helping out
35 with, and, anyway, I would see, Dr. Simmons, maybe if you could
36 comment on that a little bit, and I don't know if it would be
37 appropriate for us to maybe consider some small increase to the
38 State of Florida, over the other states, because of that, or
39 some flexibility to -- Because we are disproportionately calling
40 on the State of Florida's law enforcement people, compared to
41 the other states, and so can you comment on that, Dr. Simmons?
42

43 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes. Thank you. That is correct.
44 For several years now, since our office is located in Tampa, we
45 have called upon FWC officers, uniformed officers, to help us
46 with those meetings, and there's been no additional funds that
47 have gone to the state for that.
48

1 I did talk with Ms. McCawley, and I believe she did discuss,
2 with Captain Pearce, whether the \$5,000 was going to be enough
3 to cover this additional request, and I believe, at this time,
4 it was appropriate, but, if the committee would like to consider
5 additional funding, because there are some states that are
6 spending way more than their \$45,000 in liaison funds, that's
7 certainly up for the committee's discussion.

8
9 I would note that, like Ms. Hager said, at the end of next year,
10 we'll be at the end of our five-year grant cycle, and so,
11 oftentimes, we have given the states and commission much larger
12 chunks of money, at the end of our grant cycle, if it's
13 available.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay, and so do we need to modify this to
16 add money to that or just hold off? Mr. Gill.

17
18 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so, if we opted to
19 increase the funding to Florida, my question for C.J. is would
20 it go to FWC, or would it get sucked up in the general budget
21 somewhere?

22
23 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Mr. Sweetman.

24
25 **DR. SWEETMAN:** This would be focused primarily on council-
26 related meetings, council-related items, that FWC Law
27 Enforcement would be attending. This was provided, and,
28 honestly, appreciated, to help recover some of the costs for a
29 lot of the meetings that we attend, just as Carrie explained.
30 You know, a lot of those are based in Florida, a
31 disproportionate amount relative to some of other states.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Mr. Chairman.

34
35 **MR. DIAZ:** I just want to say, based on Dr. Simmons' answer, I
36 mean, I'm comfortable with -- I'm not on the committee, but I'm
37 comfortable with the \$5,000 increase, and, should the State of
38 Florida put together something for a future meeting, before we
39 take final action on this budget, and there's some amount that
40 has been researched and all, I mean, I would certainly support
41 that, because I know you are shouldering a larger burden than
42 the other states, and we appreciate the Florida Law Enforcement
43 folks being so willing to help. It's been a giant help, and so
44 thank you.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Dr. Sweetman.

47
48 **DR. SWEETMAN:** To that point, I mean, we've only discussed, on

1 our end, the \$5,000 increase, but certainly, before Full
2 Council, I can work with Jessica McCawley and Captain Pearce to
3 see if there is any potential other funds that could be utilized
4 along those lines, and so more to come, I guess.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. With that said, then I think we'll
7 just leave the motion as it stands and then leave that open for
8 discussion for the future, if that's okay with Dr. Simmons.

9
10 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I was just asking if we needed to
11 add 2023 in here.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Are we good? Are we going to put --
14 Okay. Is there any other discussion? **Is anyone against it? If
15 not, the motion carries.**

16
17 Okay, and now where are we at? Let me see if I can get back to
18 my calendar here. All right. Dr. Simmons, I think that's all
19 we have in that, and is that correct, and now we'll go down to
20 the other items. All right. In other items, we have a couple
21 of things there, and one of the things is the 2023 Advertising
22 for Red Drum and Coastal Migratory Pelagics Advisory Panels.
23 Dr. Simmons, would you like to talk about this?

24 25 **OTHER BUSINESS**

26 **2023 ADVERTISING FOR RED DRUM AND COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS APs**

27
28 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Some years
29 ago, and I think most folks recall that we have three-year
30 cycles for our APs, and we stagger them, so that we're not doing
31 all of them at one time, and so, this year, the Red Drum AP and
32 the Coastal Migratory Pelagics AP is up for reappointment, if
33 that is the pleasure of the committee and council.

34
35 I would just note that the Red Drum AP has not been convened
36 during this term cycle, whereas the Coastal Migratory Pelagics
37 AP has been convened three times during this cycle, and so we
38 often struggle with material and agenda items that we would put
39 in front of this AP, and so what I am asking the committee is
40 would you like to maintain the current membership of the Red
41 Drum AP and perhaps readvertise for the Coastal Migratory
42 Pelagics, or would you like to readvertise for both advisory
43 panels?

44
45 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Any discussion on this? Yes, Mr.
46 Gill.

47
48 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so I agree with the

1 supposition that expending effort and resources on repopulating
2 the Red Drum Committee doesn't make sense, or AP panel, and it
3 makes little sense to me, and so I think we ought to advertise
4 for the CMP AP only.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Chris, I think you're the head of
7 the Red Drum Committee, and is there anything that you would
8 like to add to that?

9

10 **MR. CHRIS SCHIEBLE:** Well, I'm not on this committee here, and
11 so I think -- You know, we could repopulate this as the need
12 comes, correct, Dr. Simmons, and so it would be similar to the
13 IFQ Focus Group. If the council decided that they needed to
14 have this repopulated at a later date, we could then revisit it,
15 correct?

16

17 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes, that is correct. I also
18 forgot to mention that your ad hocs -- You tell us at the
19 beginning of every year if you want to keep them as well, and so
20 it would be considered more of an ad hoc AP, if we did it that
21 way, but we can certainly convene them and repopulate as needed.

22

23 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Okay. I'm good with that, but I'm not on this
24 committee, and so --

25

26 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay, and so, Mr. Gill, was that a motion
27 that you were making?

28

29 **MR. GILL:** I don't believe a motion is needed, but I would defer
30 to Dr. Simmons.

31

32 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I think it would helpful, Mr.
33 Chair, if we had a motion, so there's clarity, and then we can
34 take that and send it to the members.

35

36 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Mr. Gill.

37

38 **MR. GILL:** I was trying to reduce paperwork here, Dr. Simmons.
39 **Well, I move that we readvertise for the Coastal Migratory**
40 **Pelagics Advisory Panel only.**

41

42 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** We have a motion. Do we have a second? We
43 have a second. Any discussion? No discussion. **Any objection?**
44 **The motion carries.** Okay, and so -- Excuse me. Do you need
45 anything on that, Dr. Simmons?

46

47 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** No. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay, and so now we are up to the added
2 item, and, Mr. Gill, I think you would like to address that.

3
4 **DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC COMMENT**
5

6 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so the subject of this
7 item is public comment, and, for those that you have read Adam
8 Grant's book *Rethinking*, it falls squarely within that context.
9 My thought is that we haven't considered changing,
10 substantially, public comment, maybe since inception, and it's
11 always been this way, and it's always been the afternoon before
12 Full Council, and maybe that's the best, but, on the other hand,
13 we've never really looked at anything else.

14
15 What I am suggesting is that we consider other ways to conduct
16 public comment that might improve both the process and
17 stakeholder involvement.

18
19 I've been in discussions with several stakeholders who think
20 similarly, and how we do it, I'm not getting there, but the
21 question is just taking a look at it. I would note that most
22 every council, and maybe Andy or somebody could clarify, but
23 many councils do it differently, and maybe every council does it
24 differently, and I'm not sure that anyone does it the same way,
25 which says there is room for tailoring how we do public comment,
26 to get that input to the council that works best for us.

27
28 This, by the way, would apply to the SSC as well as the council,
29 and part of the thinking, on my end, and the stakeholders' end,
30 is there is potential value, it seems to me, to consider, in
31 some fashion, and I don't know how we do it, but, in some
32 fashion, getting public comment prior to committee and council
33 discussions, rather than waiting until all the substantive
34 discussion is done, and the train is well down the tracks kind
35 of thing, and having their input help shape those discussions.

36
37 This really came to mind, for me, several -- Maybe a year ago,
38 at an SSC, on their public comment, where theirs has been
39 typically at the end of the day, on the last day, and some of
40 the comments that were made I thought that, boy, it would really
41 have been helpful if they had discussed that during that
42 discussion on whatever that agenda item was, and I am thinking
43 similarly here.

44
45 I think it has to be carefully structured. You know, I think
46 there's potential positives, as I said, in including
47 stakeholders more inclusively in the process, and also helping
48 that discussion, if they're bringing up points that may not

1 otherwise occur.

2
3 The downside, of course, is that we certainly don't want to add
4 to the time effort, and so how we do that is not clear to me,
5 but I think, for a starter, we could see what the other councils
6 -- How they're handling it, what they like, what they're
7 possibly thinking of changing, if they are, to see if any of
8 that works, and then thinking a little more broadly about is
9 there a better way to do this, because I think, if we thought
10 about it, I would say we might. Maybe not, but I think it's
11 worth a look.

12
13 We certainly haven't considered it in many, many years, and,
14 Andy, you can tell me, I would guess -- I know in the last
15 twenty years we haven't done it, and so I think it's time to
16 rethink how we do public comment, and I am fine if we go through
17 that process and we don't change it, and that's an acceptable
18 endpoint, but, if we don't look at it, we never will, and so my
19 recommendation is, and I would defer to Dr. Simmons, and I don't
20 think we need a motion, but, if we do, we do, but I would like
21 to start that process on rethinking, and I think it falls in
22 Emily's bailiwick primarily, to take a look at how might we
23 revise public comment, to do better for both the process, the
24 council, and the stakeholders. Thank you.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Is there any discussion on this?
27 Mr. Schieble.

28
29 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not on this committee,
30 again, but maybe -- Mr. Gill, how would you consider the thought
31 of maybe having a survey of the actual public, to see what they
32 prefer, and maybe we could have a survey that they take when
33 they sign-up for public comment that's very short, a few
34 questions, that say when would you prefer to have public
35 comment, and I don't know, and that's Emily's shop, but
36 something to see what the public prefers and not just
37 necessarily what the council prefers.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Mr. Strelcheck.

40
41 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks. I'm not on your committee as well, and
42 I do appreciate Bob's thinking on this, and I think it's always
43 good to review processes and procedures, and I will speak for
44 myself, that I often find public comment not very satisfactory,
45 both from the stakeholders' perspective as well as the input and
46 the process that it provides for the council and the kind of
47 timing of that, and so I am certainly open to the idea of
48 exploring other options.

1
2 I want to look to Carrie, because I know, Carrie, you and I have
3 been talking, as well as others, about just broader regulatory
4 efficiencies, right, and we've had some emails shared with
5 regard to looking at framework procedures, and I know you
6 presented to this council, back in August or October, on some
7 ideas to streamline the process.

8
9 It seems like, you know, and not to overly complicate this idea,
10 but it kind of rolls into, you know, new ways of doing business,
11 and it could be looked at not just for public comment, but more
12 broadly, in terms of other efficiency initiatives that this
13 council could make, and then I would add, since I sit on
14 multiple councils, that it would be even looking to the other
15 councils as well, as process improvements that we could
16 streamline for the Southeast.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. I can tell you that I'm a member of
19 about six different councils, and none of them do it the same
20 way. Mr. Gill.

21
22 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to iterate,
23 because Dr. Nance is here, that I would urge Ryan and the SSC to
24 consider the same process. Theirs is a whole lot different than
25 the council process, because their numbers are way smaller, and
26 so they have a lot more flexibility in achieving the same end,
27 but I think, conceptually, it's the same thing, that, if they
28 rethink how they do public comment, there may be more value to
29 them and to the stakeholders. Thank you.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Dr. Simmons.

32
33 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so a
34 couple of things. As you stated, each of the regional councils
35 handle this very differently, and they handle it differently for
36 council meetings and for SSC meetings, and we didn't used to
37 allow public comment, I think, when we first started having SSC
38 meetings, and, to my knowledge, that's only been recently
39 allowed, really since COVID, and so that is a change.

40
41 During the communications sub-working group, this is a topic
42 that the other regional councils are going to -- The various
43 public information officers are going to be discussing, and we
44 could certainly bring back a summary regarding, you know, that
45 feedback from that body for the different types of meetings, and
46 I would like to keep them separate, or think about them
47 differently.

48

1 I know a lot of other councils allow folks to sit down, and
2 there's no time limit, and I think most of it allow it after
3 committees deliberate, but I'm not sure how much streamlining
4 that would allow us, as far as like administratively, if we had
5 public comment before every committee, and I hope everybody
6 likes five-day meetings, if we did that, but I think we just
7 need to think about, after we look at what other councils are
8 doing, what is our goal? What do we want to improve? What are
9 we not achieving that other councils are, so that we're not just
10 shooting in the dark and trying to hit a target. Thanks.

11

12 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Mr. Chairman.

13

14 **MR. DIAZ:** I just want to weigh-in. First of all, thank you,
15 Bob, for bringing this up. I think, even when we're doing a
16 good job, we can always do better, and I do believe, and this is
17 a fact, and, I mean, the best ideas that have moved through this
18 council have come through public comment, and, I mean, that's
19 just the way it works, and it's supposed to work that way, but,
20 as a chair, you all were worried about time, and we're trying to
21 set these agendas, and how do we get as much crammed into --
22 Look, on Tuesday, you all got a half-hour lunch on Tuesday,
23 because we're trying to jam as much -- We want to get every
24 second of your time that we can get.

25

26 So, I mean, I like where we're going, and I think we should
27 review this and try to figure out if we can do better and more
28 efficiently and more satisfying for the public, and so I welcome
29 this, and I think it's a good discussion to have, and,
30 hopefully, at the end of the day, we can balance all these
31 things and make the whole process better, and so, anyway, thank
32 you for bringing that up, Bob.

33

34 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. I think this is -- Bob, I think the
35 deal with this is it's obviously something that we need to look
36 at, and I think, Carrie, if it's all right with you, we'll just
37 table this, at this time, and let the staff look at it, and let
38 the committee look at it, and see if we can come up with a
39 process of how we would like to do it, unless we would like to
40 have a vote on that, or have a motion on it, and, Carrie, you
41 tell me how you feel.

42

43 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I
44 think what we could do, and a motion would be good as well, but,
45 I mean, we have this communications working group, and they
46 already have staff from each of the regional councils, and we
47 could start with a presentation on what that group discussed,
48 and what the differences are for the different types of

1 meetings, and the committee could get -- Maybe it goes O&E,
2 instead of Admin/Budget, and we can start there, if that's okay,
3 Mr. Chair.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. Do we need any motion?

6

7 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** We'll just include it in the
8 report, if that's all right.

9

10 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay. I guess we will need to put it in
11 the report, but do you want to make any type of comment on that?

12

13 **MR. GILL:** I have lost the thread, Mr. Chairman. Are we looking
14 for a motion?

15

16 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** I don't think so.

17

18 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I don't think we need it, and I
19 think that I understand that you want to get a presentation from
20 the communications subgroup on what different councils are doing
21 for public comment for different types of meetings, and that
22 would go to O&E first, and is that okay?

23

24 **MR. GILL:** As a first step, yes.

25

26 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** Okay.

27

28 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you.

29

30 **CHAIRMAN SPRAGGINS:** All right. Is there any other business for
31 the Admin/Budget? Mr. Chairman, it took a little bit extra, but
32 it started a little late, and so I think that closes our
33 committee, and thank you very much.

34

35 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on January 30, 2023.)

36

37

- - -