

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

ADMINISTRATIVE/BUDGET COMMITTEE

The Lodge at Gulf State Park Gulf Shores, Alabama

April 4, 2022

VOTING MEMBERS

- Phil Dyskow.....Florida
- Susan Boggs.....Alabama
- Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- Bob Gill.....Florida
- Jessica McCawley.....Florida
- Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana
- Bob Shipp.....Alabama
- Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi
- Troy Williamson.....Texas

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

- Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
- Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
- Billy Broussard.....Louisiana
- Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
- Tom Frazer.....Florida
- Dakus Geeslin (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
- Lisa Motoi.....USCG
- Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
- Greg Stunz.....Texas

STAFF

- Assane Diagne.....Economist
- Matt Freeman.....Economist
- John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
- Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
- Karen Hoak.....Administrative & Financial Assistant
- Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist
- Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
- Mary Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
- Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
- Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director
- Carly Somerset.....Fisheries Outreach Specialist

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

- Peter Hood.....NMFS
- Laurilee Thompson.....SAFMC
- John Walter.....SEFSC

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PAGE 14: Motion that the council implement an electronic voting system for council and council committee motions that have opposition. All roll call votes shall be by electronic voting. Results shall be recorded and included in the minutes. Staff to select appropriate software and timing of implementation and modify the SOPPs as necessary. The motion carried on page 20.

- - -

1 The Administrative/Budget Committee of the Gulf of Mexico
2 Fishery Management Council convened at The Lodge at Gulf State
3 Park on Monday morning, April 4, 2022, and was called to order
4 by Chairman Phil Dyskow.

5
6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
7 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
8 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
9

10 **CHAIRMAN PHIL DYSKOW:** I would like to call this meeting of the
11 Admin/Budget Committee to order. The voting members of this
12 committee are myself, Phil Dyskow, and the Vice Chair is Dr. Bob
13 Shipp. Also on the committee is Patrick Banks, Susan Boggs,
14 Dave Donaldson, Bob Gill, Jessica McCawley, General Spraggins,
15 and Troy Williamson. The first order of business is to adopt
16 the agenda. I would entertain a motion to do so.

17
18 **MR. BOB GILL:** So moved, Mr. Chairman.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Do we have a second?

21
22 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** Second.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Okay. If there is no opposition, we will
25 assume the agenda is adopted. The next order of business is to
26 approve the minutes of our August 2021 meeting, and do I have a
27 motion to do that?

28
29 **MR. DONALDSON:** So moved.

30
31 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** Second.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you. Now we have the agenda approved,
34 and we have the minutes of the prior meeting approved. That
35 leads us to the Action Guide and Next Steps, and I will turn it
36 over to Dr. Simmons to go through that.

37
38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good
39 morning, everyone. We have two main agenda items. The first
40 one is the review of our anticipated 2022 activities for you to
41 provide feedback on, and then we have a draft of the 2022
42 budget, with our 2021 expenditures. This is not our final
43 funded budget, and so this is primarily informational, and we're
44 here to gather feedback regarding activities. Then, when we get
45 our final funding, we will bring this back to you with any
46 revisions that we need to make to the 2022 budget and activities
47 later in the year.

1 The second agenda item is Agenda Item V, and we're going to
2 discuss an electronic voting process for the council and the
3 council bodies, including any available technology, and I have a
4 short presentation on that, and, if you choose to move forward
5 with considering this, you probably will need to make a motion
6 to modify the SOPPs, and then we will need to work through some
7 logistics, to move forward with this, and so, Mr. Chair.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you. Why don't we begin with the
10 budgeted activities? I don't see it up on the screen yet, but,
11 looking at where we are with the budget and the protected
12 activities.

13
14 **REVIEW OF 2022 ANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET AND 2021 FUNDED**
15 **EXPENDITURES**
16 **REVIEW OF 2022 BUDGETED ACTIVITIES**
17

18 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Okay. Thank you. This is Tab G,
19 Number 4(a). I think everyone can see it on their computers, if
20 you can't see it on your screen, and so we'll start with the
21 meetings of the council, what we have planned in 2022. We have
22 five council meetings, four South Atlantic Council meetings for
23 one council member to attend, and we do have two meetings of the
24 Gulf and South Atlantic Workgroup, which is looking at that
25 Section 102 of the Modernizing Fisheries Management Act of 2018,
26 and then we have two Council Coordinating Committee meetings
27 scheduled.

28
29 In 2021 just for your information, we held all of those, with
30 the exception of only one Section 102 meeting, and so we were
31 pretty close to what we had planned.

32
33 Regarding trainings, we have the regional and national new
34 council member training, and we've scheduled two of those, and
35 then we have several calls and trainings with the CCC, and, last
36 year, we did those virtually, and those were held, but we didn't
37 have meeting costs, because they were held virtually.

38
39 For the SSC meetings, and I'm not going to read every single one
40 of them, regarding the Standing and Special SSCs we have, but we
41 did have several planned, and we actually held one additional
42 one for almost all our special SSCs in 2021, and so they were
43 quite active, and so we out that we had planned for twenty-six,
44 and we held twenty-six. Most of those were hybrid, and there
45 was a lot of folks participating virtual, and so, again, the
46 costs are not going to be as high as when we start traveling and
47 having in-person meetings.

48

1 Regarding advisory panels, we have several scheduled, or planned
2 to hold, in 2022. We have had one Reef Fish AP meeting, earlier
3 this year, so far. Last year, we had -- We held eight of those,
4 and we had planned fourteen.

5
6 Regarding technical committees, we have three technical
7 committees of Ecosystem, Education and Outreach, and Law
8 Enforcement. We had planned five this year, and we held four
9 last year. Working groups, some of these working groups are
10 pretty new. They were formed in 2021, and so we kind of plan
11 those in the middle of the year, and we had planned five this
12 year, for those various working groups, and we held four last
13 year.

14
15 The National Saltwater Recreational Fishing Summit was already
16 held, and that was in-person. The Highly Migratory Species
17 Advisory Panel, I'm not sure if -- They didn't meet last year,
18 and we had planned those, and we are planning them again this
19 year, but they were not held, and I think there were a few
20 virtual calls, or webinars, and the same with the International
21 Commission for Conservation of Atlantic Tuna, the one in-person,
22 but they were all held virtually.

23
24 The SEDAR meetings in 2022 are going to be a little bit
25 different, with the exception of the Steering Committee meeting.
26 We have two of those every year, and typically one is in-person
27 and one is virtual. Both of those were held last year, but they
28 were virtual.

29
30 We are going to have the red snapper SEDAR data workshop, and
31 that's coming right up in May, planned, and the gray snapper
32 SEDAR life history and shore mode topical working groups, and
33 those are going to have some webinars for that right now.
34 Mutton snapper SEDAR data workshop and webinars, the Gulf scamp
35 research track, and we're going to have the operational
36 assessment, and we have a working group for that. Right now,
37 those are planned to be virtual.

38
39 Then there is a SEDAR procedural workshop for fishery-
40 independent indices development, and that was planned last year,
41 but it got moved to this year, and so we had -- You will see
42 that, obviously, these are going to be different from last year
43 than what we're planning this year.

44
45 For public hearings, we're probably being a little ambitious on
46 this, but we went ahead and we said, well, if we hold all these,
47 this is where we would be budgetarily, and we did go ahead and
48 plan for seven in-person and one scoping meeting for 36C, and,

1 for Amendment 54, for amberjack, seven in-person and one
2 virtual.

3
4 We held red grouper in-person hearings last year for Amendment
5 53, and we are planning, later in the year, thinking that we
6 might have Amendment 33 done, and so went ahead and budgeted for
7 seven in-person public hearings for 33, king mackerel
8 allocation, and then the joint amendment to require electronic
9 reporting, and that's in its early stages, and so it's possible
10 that we might not get that done this year, but we went ahead and
11 planned for it.

12
13 Regarding outreach efforts, my Public Information Officer is out
14 on maternity leave, and so we haven't spent a whole lot of time
15 talking about this, and the January council meeting was virtual,
16 but what we have historical done, and in talking with Carly, is,
17 in each of the states, we have coordinated with the state folks,
18 and we've held like one fishing club meeting and then one
19 special event, being ICAST or the Alabama Fishing Rodeo or
20 something like that, and so we'll be reaching out to the states,
21 to see what the best events would be, based on how things are
22 going with COVID-19 and all those types of things. Mr. Chair, I
23 will take any questions or feedback.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons. Are there any
26 questions? Seeing none, we can move on to the next part of
27 this, which is the draft budget for 2022, and this is Ms. Hager.

28
29 **2022 ANTICIPATED BUDGET AND 2021 EXPENDITURES**

30
31 **MS. BETH HAGER:** Good morning. In our table here, we are going
32 to look at the 2022 budget, on the right-hand side. The left
33 side, we have the 2021 funded budget, the expenditures, and then
34 the variance. At the very bottom of the table, when we get down
35 there, we've gone ahead and added a little information, so that
36 you can see the 2020 carryover as well and what we expended
37 there.

38
39 The figures are rounded to thousands, to begin with, and the
40 total funding that we received in 2021 was \$3,904,000. This
41 includes the reduction of the \$94,000, which was sent to the
42 Southeast Region in support of the permits software update, and
43 so the total actual expenditures were \$3,533,300. This leaves
44 us a carryover amount of about \$371,500, and that's just a bit
45 under 10 percent of the funding for 2021.

46
47 As you can see in the table, the majority of the unspent funds
48 were in categories related to travel, and that's at the top of

1 the table, and this is due to holding many of the virtual and
2 hybrid meetings throughout the year. The budget for meeting
3 rooms actually ended up being a little bit optimistic, because
4 costs rose very sharply once we did start holding hybrid
5 meetings and things in-person, and that was in June of last
6 year, and, because we tried to have additional space, to ensure
7 social distancing and to ensure that we were able to accommodate
8 everyone, it just wound up being a little higher, plus the
9 hotels were back open, and so their costs all increased for
10 everything that wasn't already contracted.

11
12 Also, we were still completing a few activities that were
13 related to the 2019 no-cost budget extension through the middle
14 of 2021, and so we were able to offset \$58,000 of the meeting-
15 related costs, but we had to do it proportionally, and so that's
16 why it wasn't so helpful for the meeting room space, but it was
17 very helpful for several of the other things, and so we have a
18 couple of drivers going on there that account for the variances
19 throughout the travel and salaries lines.

20
21 Do we have any questions about the 2021 expenditures? Bernie,
22 could you scroll down just a hair, maybe, and then folks can
23 see, kind of as it goes through, because meeting room costs are
24 kind of in the middle there. Everything is rounded to
25 thousands. Okay.

26
27 If we don't have any questions there, at the bottom of the
28 table, we can see the 2020 funding and expenditures. This
29 includes the accrual of the costs committed towards the shrimp
30 and gray triggerfish contracts, and so the remaining unexpended
31 funds for 2020, in total, are about 8 percent to carry forward,
32 and we have a full carry-forward amount at the bottom, and that
33 includes all of the -- Everything that's accrued.

34
35 Going back to the 2022 budget projections, and you may want to
36 scroll up to the top there, and we should bear in mind that this
37 is a draft, because we have, obviously, not received all of our
38 funding. During the fall CCC meeting, we were informed that the
39 first 2022 funds distribution would be approximately 50 percent
40 of the funding, and so we received \$2,098,000 in December, but,
41 because we don't have an exact figure, we set the draft budget
42 just a little bit under twice that amount, and it's set at
43 \$4,161,200. We will refine this when the year unfolds and we
44 get the final amount.

45
46 Dr. Simmons reviewed the 2022 activities with you all, and,
47 although we're still allowing some hybrid meeting options at
48 this time, we based the costs for the remaining activities on

1 holding in-person meetings this year, and so that's why we went
2 ahead and kept those travel expenditures in the budget at more
3 typical figures.

4
5 Because of the state of changing environment, and because the
6 travel-related costs are increasing very rapidly, these lines
7 will probably adjust by the time we all see the final budget,
8 and so personnel costs here reflect the 2022 COLA increase and
9 the increase in the SSC stipends that we approved. No
10 additional increase in the number of staff is planned at this
11 point for 2022.

12
13 Health insurance costs increased approximately 8 percent, and
14 this is less than we have received in previous years, and so
15 that's a good thing, and the increase in supplies cost is pretty
16 different from last year, but we do have many computers that are
17 reaching the end of their warranty period.

18
19 We do plan to extend the warranties where we can, and several
20 systems will still need to be replaced though, and we're finding
21 batteries are becoming a big problem, for some reason, and the
22 planned obsolescence is amazing with battery backups, and batteries
23 within devices, and so, where we can, we're repairing, but some
24 of this, including some of the server equipment, is reaching the
25 end of its warranty coverage and the end of its life cycle, and
26 so it will need to be replaced, and, again, that will be
27 adjusted as we go through the year and figure out what else we
28 can go ahead and repair or extend warranties on.

29
30 We plan to bring the revised budget back to the council, once
31 the final figure is known, and do we have any questions on what
32 we have projected here? Yes, sir.

33
34 **MR. BOB GILL:** Thank you, Beth. Good morning.

35
36 **MS. HAGER:** Good morning.

37
38 **MR. GILL:** Relative to travel expenses, I understand, as do
39 everybody, I think, what happened with the expenses in 2021
40 versus the budget. The difference, however, between the budget
41 of 2022 and 2021, does that imply that the 2021 budget included
42 a significant amount of virtual and hybrid meetings?

43
44 **MS. HAGER:** When we did finally did -- When we were able to --
45 Because we didn't pass the 2021 budget at the beginning of the
46 year either, and we were partially through, and so we had drawn
47 in down some, based on our typical projections, because, at that
48 point, we had done everything virtually, but, again, we weren't

1 sure how the year was going to transpire, and so we were trying
2 to do a balancing situation there of how many did we think might
3 be virtual and how many did we -- In some of the lines, we did
4 great, and some of the lines blew us out of the water, like the
5 meeting room costs, because of the costs going up in a way that
6 we weren't expecting.

7
8 The SSC salaries, actually, the line for 2021, if you look at
9 that one, we were able to offset some of those costs, because of
10 the 2019 activities, but then, after we passed the budget, we
11 went ahead and did an SSC increase, and so that salary increase
12 just goes slightly over what we had originally projected, and so
13 last year is just really difficult to compare what we're going
14 to be doing against. That's the thing.

15

16 **MR. GILL:** Thank you.

17

18 **MS. HAGER:** Yes, sir.

19

20 **MR. DONALDSON:** Thanks, Beth, and I think I've asked this
21 question before, and I just don't remember, but what -- You do a
22 five-year agreement, and what year are we in of the five years?

23

24 **MS. HAGER:** We're in the third year, and that's why I included
25 the 2020 and 2021 carryover, so that you all can kind of get an
26 idea of where we are, just in general. Now, we don't know what
27 the funding is going to be for the two years, and we're
28 literally in the middle of the process, and so keeping a little
29 under 19 percent, and then, as we look at 2024 and 2025, if we
30 need to start being more -- Planning more activities or things
31 like that, or adjusting what we're doing, based on the funding
32 that we have available, we have a little room to do that.

33

34 **MR. DONALDSON:** Thank you.

35

36 **MS. HAGER:** You're welcome. Anybody else? Thank you.

37

38 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you, Beth. I think the only thing we
39 can assume isn't going to change is that we're going to continue
40 to see inflation throughout the year, and so, for a first draft
41 of the 2022, we're in pretty good shape. There are some
42 unknowns, and I'm sure, the next time we look at this, some of
43 the numbers will change.

44

45 The next item on our agenda is to discuss an electric voting
46 process and some of the technology that's available to let us do
47 this. This was a request from one of the council members, and,
48 in speaking to staff, they do feel it is -- They have the

1 capability to go forward with this, and so this is open to
2 discussion, and, if we plan to do this, we would probably have
3 to entertain a motion at this time, and so let's kick this off,
4 and I think Dr. Simmons is going to handle this point.

5
6 **DISCUSS ELECTRONIC VOTING PROCESS AND AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY FOR**
7 **COUNCIL AND COUNCIL BODIES**
8

9 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes, and thank you, Mr. Chair.
10 Bernie, could we pull up Tab G, Number 5, please? You passed a
11 motion in October of 2021, and you requested staff to provide a
12 review of electronic voting options for council functions, and
13 that motion carried with no opposition.

14
15 What we thought we would do is we would take a look at what the
16 seven other regional fishery management councils were doing and
17 if they used any of this technology, especially with the
18 pandemic going on and hybrid meetings, and what we found, at the
19 time, is that no council is using a formal electronic voting
20 policy, or procedure, right now, and they haven't made any
21 changes to their SOPPs.

22
23 They have used some hand-raising features to vote electronically
24 on various platforms, such as Cisco WebEx and Go to Webinar and
25 some of those other platforms, and, also, for remote meetings,
26 or when they were electing a chair or vice chairs of the
27 committees, they were using Survey Monkey and the Election
28 Runner, which are online voting platforms, and so those are kind
29 of the electronic technologies right now that we found out that
30 the other councils are using.

31
32 We went ahead and we purchased this electronic -- This Merida
33 Electronic Voting System, and we found out that it works for
34 hybrid meetings, and you can use it for both virtual and onsite
35 members, and it uses an internet connection for remote
36 participants and then a secure radio signal if you're in the
37 room. You just have a clicker if you're in the room, and then,
38 if you're online, like our two council members that are online,
39 there would be like a web link, or a web app, that they would
40 use.

41
42 This was designed for the U.S. House of Representatives, and it
43 is used by local, state, and private organizations. It is low
44 cost, and it's flexible, and it has tabulation options. You can
45 display names, roll call votes and names, or you can just do
46 vote tabulations.

47
48 These were just some anticipated pros, and perhaps cons, that we

1 were thinking about as we are considering this process, and so
2 it is a low price point to purchase this, and we have purchased
3 it already, and it could reduce errors and time in tabulation.
4 The raising of hands, we don't see all the hands, and sometimes
5 I'm tabulating them on the sheets, the roll call sheets, and I
6 don't tabulate them right, and we have to go back and correct
7 that or whatever, and so it could improve some of that time
8 there.

9
10 As far as transparency goes, we think that the pro there would
11 be, if you're using roll call votes for probably all committees
12 and all council motions, for those virtual participants, and I'm
13 not sure if there's other ways that transparency could be
14 improved there besides that.

15
16 Some cons would be a learning curve. Don't lose that clicker.
17 Don't drop it in the bathroom, or I can't find my link, and
18 where did you send it. It would require a test period, and so,
19 you know, just be patient with us, if we go through this, and
20 then it may require updates to our Statement of Organization
21 Practices and Procedures, or SOPPs.

22
23 Just some questions for you all and some considerations, as we
24 go forward with this or not. If the council wants to pursue
25 electronic voting, how do you -- How would you like to use the
26 system? Would you like to use it for every motion or only roll
27 call votes? Use it in committees and Full Council or just Full
28 Council? Would you use it for other bodies, use it for the SSC
29 and use it for the AP? Would you only want to use it on final
30 action votes, and, if you have an electronic system, I assume,
31 because we have verbatim minutes, the chair, or myself, would
32 still need to read those votes into the record, and we would
33 still have to have some parliamentary procedures that we would
34 have to follow, even in changing the SOPPs and using the system.

35
36 I won't read all of this to you, but just a reminder that this
37 is what we have right now in our SOPPs for council meetings, and
38 in Section 3.22 is our process for the quorum and roll call
39 voting that we have in there.

40
41 This is the final section that we have in our council SOPPs, and
42 decisions by consensus are permitted, and this is when we have
43 approval of the council for these various FMPs and amendments to
44 FMPs and proposed regulations, and that's a link right there to
45 the SOPPs.

46
47 This is an excerpt from the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries
48 Conservation and Management Act, and it is actually less

1 prescriptive than what we have in our SOPPs, but this is what's
2 in Magnuson currently for your review, and that's all I have,
3 Mr. Chair, and I'm ready for questions.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons. Are there any
6 questions about this? I assume there would be.

7
8 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Bob Gill.

9
10 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess one point of
11 clarification. You indicated that you had purchased already the
12 Meridia software approach, and so do we have software or
13 hardware or whatever in-house currently?

14
15 **MS. HAGER:** In order to actually test it and make sure that it
16 could do pretty much everything we needed to do, or anything we
17 needed it to do, we needed to have -- To be able to test it,
18 really test it, and it really was very inexpensive. It was a
19 few hundred dollars, which was well -- We felt, in order to
20 actually be able to produce the result and figure out that it
21 could do, that it was capable of what you all might need, within
22 any realm of what we could think of, we went ahead and thought
23 that was a better choice.

24
25 **MR. GILL:** From my vantage point, I'm glad to hear it, because
26 my primary concern about this motion was whether the cost was
27 cost prohibitive, and so I'm glad to hear that it's not. I
28 would also note that Meridia is just one of several software
29 solutions to how electronic voting goes on, and other options
30 are available, if they happen to be better.

31
32 **MS. HAGER:** Well, this one actually was one of the very few that
33 we could find that was reasonably priced that would combine both
34 online people and in the room and allow it to be either
35 completely anonymous, and there is no tracking, or actually
36 tracked to a person, and the flexibility was really extensive
37 for the price point, and that was why we felt that this would be
38 the best one to at least test.

39
40 **MR. GILL:** I'm not being critical. In fact, I am delighted, but
41 I just didn't realize that's where you were at. It seems, to
42 me, from looking at what I consider an excellent summary of the
43 question at hand, is that the cons all -- You would get those
44 anytime you're starting anything new, and so there is no
45 significant con, and there are significant advantages in the
46 pros, and so, from my vantage point, it looks to me like a no-
47 brainer.

1 I am sure there are others that have other opinions in regard to
2 that, and, in terms of the review, I think you made a lot of
3 good points, and I've got some comments on how I think it ought
4 to go, and my feeling is that, one, we ought to implement it,
5 number one, and, number two, we ought to implement it at the
6 council and council committee level only, and try it out there,
7 because that's the learning curve aspect, and everybody is doing
8 it.

9
10 Once they've learned it, whether you're doing it at committee or
11 council makes no difference, and so I would consider that
12 utilizing it for things like the SSC or APs be put in the
13 parking lot and perhaps consider later, if we consider it at
14 all.

15
16 I would also think that we ought to use it both virtually and
17 in-person and that the results are shown on the screen, so the
18 virtual attendees can see it, and the intent is that all the
19 voting decisions are recorded and that everybody that is
20 attending the meeting, whether in-person or virtually, can
21 participate and see that result.

22
23 **I have a motion that has to be amended now, based on Dr.**
24 **Simmons' comment, but, Bernie, if you would put up the**
25 **electronic voting motion, and I would like to add to it "modify**
26 **the SOPPs, as necessary".**

27
28 That is my motion that tries to incorporate what I just
29 discussed, and I put it on the basis that we don't need to use
30 it when there is unanimity around the table on a motion. That
31 can go as it goes currently, but only when there is some
32 opposition or a roll call vote, and, ultimately, that the
33 results are available in the minutes, and staff can do -- I had
34 "select appropriate software" and so whether or not Meridia was
35 the right -- I didn't know that going in, but figure out how we
36 get it implemented, but that's, in essence, the motion. Thank
37 you, Mr. Chair.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Do we have a second for this motion?

40
41 **MS. JESSICA MCCAWLEY:** Second.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you, Jessica. We have a motion and a
44 second. I guess the next step would be to open this up for
45 discussion.

46
47 **MR. DIAZ:** There's a fair amount of hands around the room.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Chairman Diaz, I'm going to ask you to
2 recognize the people that have their hands up, because I can't
3 see them on my screen.

4
5 **MR. DIAZ:** Sure thing. I would be glad to do that. Mr.
6 Schieble.

7
8 **MR. CHRIS SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have two
9 questions. First, and I probably missed this, but has a similar
10 system to this been implemented in a different council, and, if
11 so, is it working well? This will be the first, that it's being
12 tested out, is at the Gulf Council? Okay.

13
14 The second question is for Mr. Gill. You mentioned, when you
15 were discussing this motion, before it came up, that you want to
16 have the APs and the SSC considered separate and not included in
17 the electronic voting portion of this, and so would we put a
18 second motion up for that, to keep it separate, or just choose
19 not to mention it?

20
21 **MR. DIAZ:** Mr. Gill, to that point?

22
23 **MR. GILL:** No, and my recommendation is that we don't consider
24 AP and SSC inclusion at this time, but we implement it on the
25 council and council committees only, and the suggested motion is
26 just that, and the reason is that we've got a learning curve to
27 go through, and, whether we consider it appropriate to consider
28 for the other bodies, I think we can do at a later time. I
29 think it's more important that we absorb it and bring it aboard
30 and get used to it and then make that decision at some future
31 time, if we want to make it at all.

32
33 **MR. DIAZ:** To your first question, Chris, I will try to take a
34 stab at that. In Carrie's presentation, she said no other
35 councils have implemented this system so far. The CCC has a
36 little bit of discussion on this, and there were some questions,
37 and, in the letter, the CCC answered some questions, and it
38 seemed like the primary concerns about implementing these types
39 of systems is time, how much time does it take, and, as chair,
40 that's a big concern of mine, because it seems like, every
41 meeting, we're working late, and we're having to cram the agenda
42 just as full as we can get it, and the time is a big concern for
43 me.

44
45 I did go through and just look, and some of the motions could
46 have been unanimous, Bob, and so I don't know, but, at Full
47 Council at the last meeting, we had twenty-seven motions, and in
48 Reef Fish we had nine, and I didn't go through the other

1 committees, to see what they were, but, in the course of a
2 meeting, I mean, there's a substantial amount of motions that go
3 through this council, and it's probably not unconceivable that
4 it could be fifty, and so, if it's not faster, it could, over
5 the course of the meeting, have some time consequences on the
6 meeting.

7
8 I would also point out that our current SOPPs do say that any
9 council member can call for a roll call vote at any time, and
10 it's not debatable. If it's asked for, it's done, and so it
11 doesn't have to be seconded or anything like that. Next up is
12 Ms. Boggs.

13
14 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I like the idea of
15 implementing it on a small scale, starting at the council level,
16 but I do think, if we continue to go this virtual route, which I
17 think is where we are in this world today, that we do try to
18 expand it to the SSC and the APs, and I have had a lot of
19 people, after a meeting, or after a vote, say who voted how, and
20 it would be nice, because we're supposed to be transparent, and,
21 if somebody opposes the motion, they might -- Someone in the
22 audience, or online, they might want to contact that person and
23 find out why did you vote this way and have a discussion about
24 it, and so I think it's important that, if not this motion -- I
25 mean, I will support the motion, and I think it's going to be a
26 work in progress, like everything we do at this council.

27
28 If Meridia is not the best software, then, you know, we have to
29 go back to the drawing board, but it sounds like Beth and Carrie
30 have done a lot of research, and I would support this motion.
31 Thank you.

32
33 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Ms. Boggs. Mr. Strelcheck.

34
35 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just a question for
36 Bob, or maybe you. With regard to the motion, it talks about
37 for motions that have opposition, and, in most instances,
38 obviously, it's fairly clear if a motion is going to have
39 opposition or not, and, in some instances, it's not all that
40 clear, and so I'm curious, and, in situations where the chair
41 might ask for opposition, and people will say yes, we would
42 then, at that point, go to electronic voting, and so there would
43 be kind of a two-stage process, and you would first discern
44 whether or not we're going to vote in opposition, and, if there
45 is, then committee members, or the council, would vote using
46 electronic means, and is that essentially your understanding of
47 how this would work?

48

1 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Andy, for the question, and yes, but,
2 typically, or I should say commonly, during the discussion, it's
3 clear that the motion is not going to be unanimous, and the
4 chair will then call for a vote one way or the other.

5
6 There are some motions that are made that are not clear whether
7 there is opposition, but, if there is not opposition, and it's
8 clear that there's no opposition, there's no need to go through
9 the electronic version and take more time, and so I see this
10 process as expediting our meetings and saving a lot of time,
11 particularly on roll call votes, because then the non-opposition
12 motions will go just like normal, and, if there's any question,
13 yes, the chair will have to raise that question, just like we do
14 now, and it's no different, but, if there is serious discussion
15 during the motion, then clearly you just go to the electronic
16 vote at the end, and so, at the end of the day, I think it will
17 save a good amount of time for a council meeting by this
18 process.

19
20 **MR. DIAZ:** Dr. Frazer.

21
22 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to circle
23 back on a comment that Dr. Simmons made, and so, I mean, if the
24 issue is related to some transparency here, and you don't have a
25 unanimous decision on a motion, right off the bat, and you go to
26 a vote, even if it's in committee, right, you're still going to
27 have to read into the record the names of the individuals, and
28 so, in essence, everything becomes a roll call vote, and is that
29 how you see it, Bob?

30
31 **MR. GILL:** Not exactly, Dr. Frazer, because we're talking about
32 a new technology. We do all the reading into the record because
33 we're in a manual mode. When we go to this electronic voting, I
34 don't see it as -- I would defer to legal counsel, as to whether
35 that's still required, if the electronic vote then gets recorded
36 in the minutes correctly, and, if it's visual on the screen, and
37 it's not clear to me that that's required under the new system.
38 I understand why it's required currently, because it's the only
39 way to do it, but I'm not convinced that we have to do it in the
40 future.

41
42 **MR. DIAZ:** Ms. Levy.

43
44 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Is that for me to answer that question or for me
45 to ask my own question? I mean, I think Carrie had the language
46 of the Magnuson Act up on the board, right, and so I think, if
47 you use this, and you're using it for roll call voting, meaning
48 you're not using the anonymous part of it, which seems like the

1 intent is you're going to turn every opposed motion into a roll
2 call vote, right, and then, under the Magnuson Act, the official
3 minutes, or records, have to identify the roll call vote, the
4 name of each member during the roll call, and how each member
5 voted on the roll call motion, and so, yes, it will have to be
6 identified as a roll call vote in the minutes every time you
7 take a vote using this, if you're going to identify who is
8 voting.

9
10 I mean, I guess I would just add that's what this is going to
11 do, right, and you're making a policy decision that you're going
12 to make every opposed vote on a motion a roll call vote.

13
14 **MR. DIAZ:** Dr. Simmons.

15
16 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. One thing
17 that Beth and I were talking about, and Bernie as well, that we
18 haven't completed worked through is we have a streaming
19 platform, and the meeting is streamed to folks that are
20 virtually listening in, and the motion is on the board on that
21 platform.

22
23 What we're not completely sure of is, when we see the votes,
24 whether we have to go to that website and go off this motion to
25 see the votes, and then we still would have to read the votes
26 into the record, and so that's what we need to work through, is
27 how those platforms would streamline and how we could still have
28 virtual participants see everything and not have to shift to
29 have two different meetings running and all those kinds of
30 things, and so those are the sorts of things that we still need
31 to work out at the staff level.

32
33 **MR. DIAZ:** Ms. McCawley.

34
35 **MS. MCCAWLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so we use a system
36 like this not for the voting of our commission, but we use the
37 iClicker system, and we take it to public workshops, and we let
38 people use the little clickers to do the voting. There might be
39 a way, and I don't know, and I'm not familiar with this
40 particular software platform, but there might be a way to assign
41 a clicker to an individual, and then it will show the names of
42 the individual on the screen and their vote beside it, and I'm
43 just not familiar enough with the software.

44
45 It could do that automatically, and it might just take staff
46 looking into that a little bit more. These systems are -- I
47 don't want to say state-of-the-art, because they've been around
48 for a while, but they do have the ability to show you some

1 things relatively quickly on the screen, especially if you could
2 assign the vote to a person's name, and it could be shown there
3 on the webinar next to the motion.

4
5 **MR. DIAZ:** Mr. Gill, did you have your hand up? Okay. Does
6 anybody else want to speak to this motion? Mr. Donaldson.

7
8 **MR. DONALDSON:** I think moving -- Taking advantage of technology
9 is a good thing, and, obviously, there's a lot of questions, as
10 identified by the various comments made, and I'm just wondering
11 -- Since we're the first council to be doing this, that maybe we
12 just limit it to Full Council and not the committees as well,
13 just to work out the bugs, just as a suggestion, and it might be
14 easier to test it that way. Just something to consider.

15
16 **MR. DIAZ:** Ms. Bosarge.

17
18 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** Thank you, and I'm not on your committee,
19 but I want to make sure that I understand a couple of the
20 different comments before we get to Full Council. Ms. McCawley
21 was saying that, in Florida, they use something similar to this
22 for stakeholder meetings, and she said it might be easy enough
23 to have the vote done and the names populate with their vote of
24 yes, no, or abstain on the screen, but what I thought I heard
25 Ms. Levy say is, you know, they would still need to be read into
26 the record, and so we're still going to -- Whatever is on the
27 screen, you still have to stop and back up and read that into
28 the record, and so we'll be doing that for anything that is not
29 a unanimous vote, and is that what we're talking about? Okay.
30 I just wanted to make sure that I got it.

31
32 **MR. DIAZ:** Ms. Boggs.

33
34 **MS. BOGGS:** To Dave Donaldson's comments, and that's what I was
35 sitting here, when I was reading the motion and hearing the
36 conversation at the table, and can we do it in a way that we
37 have a test period, and maybe -- I don't know how you would do
38 that, but maybe not go so far as to make it concrete, but
39 somehow say we want a one-year trial, because we meet five
40 times, but is there a way maybe not to go so deep into this and
41 just do it for a period of time, to test it? I don't know how
42 to form that.

43
44 **MR. DIAZ:** All right. I am not seeing any other hands. Mr.
45 Dyskow.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have a motion
48 and a second, and we've had discussion. The motion, as it's

1 currently stated, is the council implement an electronic voting
2 system for council and council committees. Motions that have
3 opposition, in other words only those that don't have
4 opposition, will be an electronic vote. Is that correct? Am I
5 reading that right?
6

7 **MR. DIAZ:** Mr. Gill.
8

9 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could you repeat that, Mr.
10 Chairman? The way I understood you saying it was that only non-
11 opposition motions have electronic voting, and the motion on the
12 board has it the other way. Only those that have opposition
13 will electronic voting be used.
14

15 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Okay. Mr. Gill, since it's your motion, I'm
16 going to ask you to read it, please.
17

18 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. **The motion is the council**
19 **implement an electronic voting system for council and council**
20 **committee motions that have opposition. All roll call votes**
21 **shall be by electronic voting. Results shall be recorded and**
22 **included in the minutes. Staff to select appropriate software**
23 **and timing of implementation and modify the SOPPs as necessary.**
24 Mr. Chairman.
25

26 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thank you, Mr. Gill. It sounds much clearer
27 when you say it. All right. We have a motion on the floor at
28 the committee level, and everyone knows who the committee member
29 are. **All in favor, say aye; is there any opposition to the**
30 **motion. As committee chair, I have abstained.**
31

32 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I am abstaining, also.
33

34 **CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** **All right and so the motion carries.** Next, we
35 move on to Other Business. Is there any other business before
36 this committee? Hearing none, I am going to close this
37 committee and pass it back to you, Mr. Chair.
38

39 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on April 4, 2022.)
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