GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

ADMINISTRATIVE/BUDGET COMMITTEE

IP Casino & Resort Biloxi, Mississippi

April 1, 2019

VOTING MEMBERS

Doug Boyd...................................................Texas
Susan Boggs...............................................Alabama
Martha Guyas (designee for Jessica McCawley).................Florida
Paul Mickle (designee for Joe Spraggins).....................Mississippi
Lance Robinson (designee for Robin Riechers)................Texas
Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks)...............Louisiana
Bob Shipp.................................................Alabama

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon)....................Alabama
Leann Bosarge........................................Mississippi
Jack McGovern (designee for Roy Crabtree)....................NMFS
Dale Diaz.............................................Mississippi
Dave Donaldson...........................................GSMFC
Jonathan Dugas........................................Louisiana
Phil Dyskow........................................Florida
John Sanchez.............................................Florida
Greg Stunz............................................Texas
Ed Swindell...........................................Louisiana
Lt. Mark Zanowicz.......................................USCG

STAFF

Assane Diagne........................................Economist
Matt Freeman........................................Economist
John Froeschke......................................Deputy Director
Beth Hager............................................Administrative Officer
Karen Hoak........................................Administrative & Financial Assistant
Lisa Hollensead.....................................Fishery Biologist
Mara Levy...............................................NOAA General Counsel
Emily Muehlstein.................................Public Information Officer
Ryan Rindone.................................Fishery Biologist & SEDAR Liaison
Bernadine Roy.........................................Office Manager
Carrie Simmons.................................Executive Director

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Ryan Bradley............Mississippi Commercial Fishermen United, MS
Eric Brazer.......................Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance
James Bruce........................................MS
Nikki Burch........................................MS
Traci Floyd...............................................DMR, MS
Susan Gerhart........................................NMFS
Tim Griner..............................................SAFMC
Neil Gryder..............................................Ocean Springs, MS
Ken Haddad..............................................ASA, FL

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TABLE OF MOTIONS

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PAGE 14: Motion to accept the 2019 proposed budget, as amended. The motion carried on page 14.
The Administrative/Budget Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council convened at the IP Casino & Resort, Biloxi, Mississippi, Monday morning, April 1, 2019, and was called to order by Chairman Doug Boyd.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA
APPROVAL OF MINUTES
ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS

CHAIRMAN DOUG BOYD: I will call together the Administrative and Budget Committee. The members of the committee are Dr. Mickle, Mr. Schieble, Ms. Boggs, Ms. Guyas, Mr. Robinson, and Dr. Shipp. The first item on the agenda is the Adoption of the Agenda. Are there any changes or additions to the agenda? Hearing none, we will accept the agenda.

I have the Approval of the Minutes from January of 2019. Any comments or any corrections? Hearing none, I will entertain a motion to approve the minutes.

MS. MARTHA GUYAS: Motion to approve the minutes.

MR. LANCE ROBINSON: Second.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: All right. Mr. Robinson seconds. All in favor, say aye; any opposed. The minutes are approved. The Action Guide and Next Steps, Dr. Simmons.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to go over the proposed 2019 activities, and Ms. Hager is going to review the draft 2019 budget. If you have any questions or comments or feedback, please provide that, regarding the proposed activities.

If we missed something, please let us know, or, if you think we may need more meetings or less meetings, that’s also very important information for our planning purposes.

Then we don’t have our final 2019 funding amount, and so we will have to bring a final budget to you for approval at a later date, but, if you would take a look at what we have currently proposed, based on our idea of level funding, that would be most helpful.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Anything else? Okay. Thank you. Item Number IV is Review of Anticipated Activities and Budget and 2018 Funded Expenditures. Dr. Simmons.
REVIEW OF 2019 ANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET AND 2018 FUNDED EXPENDITURES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so could we please pull up Tab G, Number 4(a)? I have indicated some of the activities that have already been conducted or we have recently conducted in here, but, of course, we have five council meetings currently proposed, and we have one council member attending four of the South Atlantic Council meetings in 2019. We have two Council Coordinating Committee meetings, and those, this year, are going to be in May, and then, in November, we’ll have, I think, the D.C. meeting. This time, it got flipped around. Usually, it’s in February.

For Scientific and Statistical Committee meetings, we plan to have five Standing SSC meetings. I do want to note that, right now, we don’t have a lot of agenda items for May. We may just need a webinar, but it looks like we have a full agenda in July, based on the SEDAR schedule, and so we can circle back to that, if anybody has any questions as we complete our business for this council, and, obviously, some things may come up.

Five Reef Fish SSC, and that special SSC is almost always convened, because reef fish is at the top of our priority list. Then one Special Coral meeting, which we’re tentatively planning for October. Of course, these special SSCs are convened jointly with the Standing members, unless there is some reason that the Chair or I decide that, in consultation with the Chair, that we should use a different format. Two Special Mackerel SSC meetings, one Shrimp, which we have already conducted in March, and then three Special Socioeconomic SSC meetings.

For advisory panel meetings, one Ad Hoc Red Snapper Private Angler AP, two Ad Hoc Red Snapper/Grouper-Tilefish IFQ meetings, one Coral, one Data Collection, one HMS/ICCAT AP, and one is planned here, and I think it’s the week or two after the council meeting, and so we’re close to completing that, one Mackerel, one Reef Fish, one Shrimp, and then one other, and that could be Red Drum or Spiny Lobster, and we don’t know of any current ongoing assessments or needs right now that we would need to convene the Spiny Lobster Committee in 2019, but, again, something could come up, and so we have planned for one other.

As far as technical committees, we would like to convene the Ecosystem Technical Committee more actively this year. You have requested that we start work on an ecosystem fishery plan, and so we’re anticipating two meetings there, one meeting of the
Education and Outreach Committee, and then two Law Enforcement meetings, and those are typically held in conjunction with the Gulf States meetings, and so we’ve already conducted one in March, and then again in October, and we’ll plan for the other.

Moving on to the next page, SEDAR meetings, we typically have our SEDAR Steering Committee meeting, and that’s our in-person meeting, in May now, and that works out better for planning, and then we will have a webinar in the fall, and, typically, that’s in September or October. Right now, for red grouper, there is a lot of assessment webinars going on, and we’re probably not going to get, I think, that assessment until late July, I believe, and so it wouldn’t go to the SSC maybe until September.

Gray triggerfish, we are anticipating we have -- A lot of these have been delayed because of the partial shutdown, and we have the data and assessment workshop in May, and there’s a lot of webinars that will have to follow after that.

Yellowtail snapper, the data workshop is now scheduled for June, and there is assessment webinars, and the review workshop is currently scheduled for September, and so we might need a later SSC meeting, when this is going to come to them, possibly, maybe in December, because it would likely not be available for the council until January.

For vermilion snapper, the data assessment workshop is not planned until later in November, and then there is a series of webinars, and then, the scamp research track, that is a joint -- It’s the first research track planned with the South Atlantic Council, and there is a lot of webinar and conference calls going on with that currently, and I also believe that schedule has been delayed quite a bit, due to the partial shutdown.

Then we added the Gulf king mackerel and Gulf cobia updates, and those are going to be just an in-house process with the Science Center, where they may have some scoping planning webinars, but then that would go to the SSC for review. It’s unlikely, due to the shutdown, that those will actually occur this year, it’s my understanding, until we get to that May Steering Committee meeting though, and it’s a little bit difficult to anticipate, and those more likely would occur in 2020, but we did list them here, just for planning purposes, and, again, that would probably be over-budgeting.

If we go down to public hearings, we have conducted the public hearings for 50, and we did, as far as 2019, we did five in-person hearings in January, and one webinar in January. It is
possible that we could go out to public hearings, we’re anticipating, for 36B, depending on where the council is, maybe late this year, and that may not occur until, I guess, early 2020, depending on how much of a priority the council thinks this is.

We need to pick back up the work on Reef Fish Amendment 48 and Red Drum 4, the SDC document, and I think we had only planned for a webinar for that, because of the technical nature of that document. For Reef Fish 51, the gray snapper status determination criteria and catch levels, I think you told us, during Reef Fish at the last council meeting, that we would just do a webinar after you approved that public hearing draft.

For Reef Fish Amendment 52, evaluating the red snapper allocation and reallocation, we are anticipating nine hearings and one webinar. Again, based on priority and timing, we’re not sure if that will happen late this year or early in 2020.

Then we still have on our list the reef fish amendment to consolidate the ABC and ACL sector allocations, and that was supposed to be a joint document. It was kind of way down on our list, and it has kind of moved down, because we were waiting for the assessment and kind of waiting to hear back from the South Atlantic Council on that, but we do have it as a potential.

For Shrimp Amendment 18, we held one in-person webinar, and you’ll hear the results of that at this meeting, and then, the Generic Amendment to Establish the Carryover Provision, we held one webinar for that, and you will hear the comments regarding that document at this meeting.

Then, just for budgeting purposes, we thought maybe there would be one other document that you may want to take out to public hearings that we haven’t anticipated, or potential scoping meetings, and so we put in six hearings then.

Then, if we go down just a little bit, you have requested that we do a barotrauma workshop, and I think Emily brought some information to you during the O&E Committee about what our plans were for that, and we’re working closely with the Gulf States Executive Director and staff on that, and I think, right now, we’re planning to add a half-day to that workshop. We want to try to have it in our office, if we can. If necessary, we’ll get a hotel, to have a bigger venue, but we’re looking at a day-and-a-half meeting for that, and that’s anticipated to be a pretty big workshop for our budget.
Then we’ve also added in here the MREP workshops, because we do send one council member to those workshops, and that is in May and October, and so I will stop there and see if there’s any questions or if we need to add something or remove something or modify.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Yes, sir.

MR. KEVIN ANSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I’m not on your committee, but, Carrie, do you have any information, or maybe Emily, any information on webinars? Is attendance to those, or participation, I guess, or views, is that increasing? Is that something that more emphasis can be put on, or it just depends on the topic?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: I will get Emily to correct me if I’m wrong, but you’re talking about for the public hearing webinars that we’re doing? I think we report that information out based on the topic, and I think it’s added to the back of most of our amendments, combined with any written comments we have received.

Depending on the issue, a lot of people just seem to be interested in understanding more about it, and they don’t always comment, but a lot of the webinars that we’ve been holding have been fairly technical, and so maybe Emily can add a little bit more to what I’m explaining there.

MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN: No, that pretty much covers it. I mean, we handle the webinars just like we handle the in-person public hearings, when it comes to reporting out our comments. We will summarize them to you, along with the other comments, and then they will be added to the back of the document, but we have been choosing to do webinars, either if it’s a framework that we think needs a little extra special attention, or if it’s a full plan amendment that we don’t think would be worthwhile to take out to the full public, to meetings, if we think that it’s going to be something that people would more want to comment on online.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Martha.

MS. GUYAS: Just a question. Are we sending council members, or a council member, I guess, to each of the SEDAR in-person meetings? Were we typically doing that? I can’t remember.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: We used to do that, but we have not, in a while, done that. If that’s something that you would
like to do, we should add it to our budget.

MS. GUYAS: I think it’s useful. I mean, having been to some of those, it kind of opens your mind to what is going on, and there are so many -- I guess, given our situation with the different data collection programs that are being used recreationally, or potentially could be used in an assessment, it might be good to start doing that again, and with some of the issues of the assessments that are coming up, like we’ve heard so much about red grouper and triggerfish, for example, that are on the docket, but that’s just my thoughts, and I don’t know where other folks are on that.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: So you’re thinking that, like during the process when we’re selecting panelists for like the SSC and advisory panelists that would participate, we would identify a council member, and they would potentially attend any in-person workshops and try to listen to the webinars and then the review, or whenever it went to the SSC, and so you would have one council member, or do you foresee having multiple council members participating in the various meetings?

MS. GUYAS: Ideally, one for one assessment, the different pieces and parts. Moving in and out and having different people would be probably counterproductive.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Go ahead, Dr. Simmons.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would ask Dr. Shipp. I know, when I first started working for the council, we sent council members to SEDAR assessments, and I think we sat next to each other during a couple of them, and I guess, due to budgetary constraints, we went back and removed this process, and do you recall some of the rationale, the positives and negatives, of why we made that decision, without going back and looking into the minutes?

DR. BOB SHIPP: I just think that it was something we just did, and I don’t recall any rationales for doing it, other than council members -- There was always one sent to almost any activity, and so I know that doesn’t help at all, does it?

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Any other questions or comments? Okay. Go ahead, Dr. Simmons.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: I think, if we want to do that, because most council members would be eligible for a salary, and so we would be putting that in our budget, and, if we would like
to move forward with that, if we could have a motion, for clarity. If you don’t want to do it now during committee, maybe during Full Council, but I think that would be ideal, so we have clear direction that that’s what we want to do, moving forward.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Martha, do you want to make a motion at this point?

MS. GUYAS: Sure, and I’ll put one up, just to keep the conversation going. I guess my motion would be to include, in the budget, funding to have a council member to attend the SEDAR meetings.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: We have a motion, and it has been seconded by Dr. Shipp. Martha, is that your motion? All right. There is a motion on the board. Is there discussion? Dr. Mickle.

DR. PAUL MICKLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Martha, are you intending that the person be present in person, or can attend the webinar, by your motion? Is it either/or, or are you demanding that it be in-person?

MS. GUYAS: I would say either/or. I think, just having attended the in-person workshops, it would be probably difficult to do on a webinar, but they have a lot of -- A lot of their meetings are on webinar, and so I guess I can be flexible here, but, if it were me, and it was in-person, I would want to be there for in-person.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Is there further discussion? Dr. Simmons.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Just one more question, just to make sure that, moving forward -- So this council member would be decided on by the Chair, I’m assuming, like all the other meetings we have, SSC meetings, who is our council liaison, or AP meetings, et cetera? Is that the intent?

MS. GUYAS: Sure. That’s fine.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Dr. Shipp.

DR. SHIPP: I was going to say pretty much the same thing that Carrie did, that it be at the discretion of the Chair. The motion, though, doesn’t really dictate anything other than the budget component of it, and so the sense of the motion almost automatically leaves it to the discretion of the Chair.
CHAIRMAN BOYD: I would think it would just be like any other appointment for a particular meeting. Any other discussion? Hearing none, is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing no opposition, the motion passes. Dr. Simmons, anything else?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: If there is nothing else on the activities, Beth will go through the numbers with the committee.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Okay. Number IV(b) is the 2019 Anticipated Budget, Tab G, Number 4(b), and Ms. Hager.

2019 ANTICIPATED BUDGET

MS. BETH HAGER: As we turn to Tab 4(b), we see the 2018 budget alongside the 2018 expenditures, and then the 2019 draft budget, which, of course, will be altered to send someone -- Based on the last motion that we just had. Overall, all of the figures are in thousand-dollar increments, and so, for example, $192.1 is actually $192,100.

As Dr. Simmons mentioned, due to the federal shutdown, the spring CCC meeting was cancelled, and that’s the meeting where we usually receive an indication of our anticipated funding for the year, and we did have a brief budget update during the conference call on Friday.

Between the slight increase to our base funding, likely rescissions, and last year’s one-time funding for deregulation reform, we still think that funding is going to probably come in close to level with 2018, and so this budget is based on total funding of $3,801,000. That will change when we actually get our real numbers, and so, at that time, I will go in and adjust for the council member to participate in the SEDAR process as well.

Looking at what we have here, beginning with personnel, for 2019, we have decreased our anticipated 2019 personnel costs to align with our projected stipend and staffing costs. We have had significant changes in staffing positions in the last year, and the cumulative effect of retiring staff, new hires, promotions, it has allowed us to reduce our projected salary and FICA costs.

We did reevaluate our budget model for council and SSC stipends, based on the 2018 actual expenditures and our revised membership rosters, and this resulted in a small decrease, based on our 2019 proposed activities, and, of course, that will adjust
again, based on the SEDAR.

When we get to fringe benefits, like many regional management councils and other small businesses we’re experiencing increases in health costs. In November of 2018, our health provider indicated that we would be faced with up to a 21 percent increase for our health benefits in 2019.

We immediately requested multiple insurance quotes from our broker. During this process, we evaluated many different options, and we determined that cost savings were available by consolidating our dental and vision and life insurance under one carrier. In addition, we moved to a comparable health insurance plan with the same carrier. Based on these changes, we still faced an overall 15 percent increase in insurance benefit costs in 2019. These costs may still be offset though with funding from the CRCP, or coral award, and EFH contracts.

At this time, we have not included the addition of funds to the leave accounts, as we were able to fund this in 2018. If additional funds are available in the future, we might revisit this line item at that time.

Travel is going to change somewhat, based on the previous discussion, and we also have a very ambitious meeting schedule. Even so, we’re going to continue to adjust our budgeting methodology, and we expect this budget to align more closely to our actual expended costs in 2019. As you can see, we did have a variance in 2018.

In our equipment, supplies, contractual, and other costs, we’re just going to kind of go through all of it overall, and we budgeted $30,000 in the equipment line. This, along with a trade-in allowance, will allow us to replace the van. It is no longer under warranty, and so it’s about time, and we originally anticipated replacing more of our server equipment in 2019, but we’ve been able to extend the service of many of the components with small updates, software updates, and some minor architectural changes, and so we will be saving more, based on our original budget.

The supplies line is much higher than last year, as it includes replacing ten PCs that are approaching obsolescence, the purchase of a new reference management software, and updating the council sound equipment to newer technology.

Contractual costs include $45,000 allocated to each of the five states and the commission, a review of our web technologies,
with an eye towards streamlining and incorporating some best
doctor practices. Other costs in this category include computer file
monitoring and back-ups, equipment service, transcription, and
congressional reporting costs. We also have property damage and
automobile insurance in this category, both of which increased
by 5 percent in 2019.

Although the total rent costs will be higher in 2019 than in
2018, we did realize a bit more savings in 2018 than we had
budgeted, due to the construction delays of the new office, and
this resulted in no rent costs for approximately two months.
Compared with the rising rent costs on our old office space,
we’ll actually save over $67,000 in 2019.

We will receive significant savings from our renegotiated copier
lease, and this is reflected in the leased equipment line and in
the printing line, as we will no longer be charged for metered
copy counts. You can see that printing goes down to $3,500 from
the $16,000 budgeted originally in 2018. This brings our total
projected budget at this time level with the 2018 funded budget,
and do we have any questions?

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Any questions from the committee? Seeing no
questions, I will entertain a motion to accept the 2019 proposed
budget, to be amended with those changes that Martha gave us a
motion on.

MS. HAGER: It’s a draft, yes.

DR. MICKLE: Motion to accept.

CHAIRMAN BOYD: Dr. Mickle, thank you. Is there a second?
Second by Martha. Any discussion? Since this is the basis for
our operation, I think we ought to have a show of hands, rather
than just kind of a negative vote. All in favor of the 2019
proposed budget, please raise your hand, eight in favor; any
opposed to the budget. The budget is approved for 2019. Thank
you.

Does anyone have any further business for the Admin Committee?
Seeing none, Mr. Chairman, we are adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on April 1, 2019.)

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