GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

ADMINISTRATIVE/BUDGET COMMITTEE

The Tremont House

Galveston, Texas

OCTOBER 21, 2019

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Dave Donaldson ..................................................GSMFC
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Carrie Simmons ................................................Executive Director

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TABLE OF MOTIONS

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The Administrative/Budget Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council convened at the Tremont House, Galveston, Texas, Monday morning, October 21, 2019, and was called to order by Chairman Phil DySkow.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA
APPROVAL OF MINUTES
ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS

CHAIRMAN PHIL DYSKOW: I have only had a few discussions since this appointment, as it applies to the Administrative/Budget, but be assured that these actions of the Gulf Council staff are audited by an outside auditor, and they do follow GAAP principles, and so they’re going down the right path with all of their financial activities.

I would like to start by putting out the agenda, if I can get staff to do that. There are a couple of important issues that we need to finalize today for Dr. Simmons, one of which is we need to approve the budget carryover into 2020, and Dr. Simmons will be discussing that, and the other thing that we need to do is prioritize the carryover activities, because we have many potential activities, but a smaller budget. In other words, we can’t do all of them, and so we would like some guidance as far as prioritizing those. I would like to entertain a motion to adopt this agenda.

MR. JOE SPRAGGINS: Motion.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: The motion is made. Do we have a second?

MR. DAVE DONALDSON: Second.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Is there any opposition? The motion carries. The next thing we need to go through is the Approval of our August 2019 Minutes. I need a motion to entertain that.

MR. SPRAGGINS: So moved.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Is there a second? We have a second. Any opposition to this motion? The motion carries. The next item on the agenda will be introduced by Dr. Simmons, and that’s the Action Guide and Next Steps. Dr. Simmons.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning, everyone. We have two main agenda items, as Mr. DySkow said, and I will just give you an overview, again, of what those are. Ms. Hager is going to walk us through our
refined projections for anticipated year-end fiscal position, and those are going to be projections for the end of 2019, and we have some proposed carryover activities that we want to go through with you, and that’s in the other carryover activities category, and then we have the anticipated unexpended funds that we’re going to look at with nine different contractual projects that we’re going to provide an overview of, and we’re going to ask for a priority list from the council, from the committee and then the council. With that, maybe we can turn it over to Ms. Hager.

**UPDATE OF 2015-2019 PROJECTED EXPENDITURES AND BUDGET CARRYOVER TO 2020**

**MS. BETH HAGER:** I am presenting remotely today, and so, Bernie, if you put up the funds status, 2015 to 2019, and that’s Tab G, Number 4. This is very similar, and it’s the same format, to what we looked at in August, and so, at the top, we have our actual expenditures from the beginning of the award to 2018, December of 2018, and that’s $13,692,220. Then we have our expenditures that are now updated through September of 2019, for this year, which would be a total of $2,835,584.

Then we look at our estimated obligations from October through December, and so we’re only looking at the last quarter now, and so this is a lower number than before, and we have $1,128,815. That is based on our anticipated meetings, payroll, rent, all of our regular costs through the end of the year, and so we’re looking at a final figure of $17,656,619.

Since our funding was $18,953,575, we have a potential fund remaining of $1,296,956, but, as we presented in August, we have some carryover activities that are already planned, and these are the meeting activities that we haven’t been able to complete in this last period, and those stand at the same number, $546,283.

The other carryover activities, we have been able to revise that number slightly and refine it. We have the 508 document compliance number changed a little bit and the EFH potential carryover is based on whatever activity we get done in this year, between now and December, and so that number will change slightly too between now and the end of the year.

Overall, it leaves us an expended fund of about $316,000 to look at these other activities that Dr. Simmons is going to review for you all in the next tab, and she’s going to review the other carryover activities in a little more detail and give you some
more discussion on those contractual projects. Does anybody have any questions?

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Dr. Simmons, before we go on, is it your desire that the committee approve this expenditure, this carryover expenditure, and then we can bring it before the Full Council later in the meeting?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: I suggest we go through some of these activities and see if there’s any questions, and then we can talk about the contracts, and then, maybe at the end, it would be appropriate for a motion.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Okay, and so, again, there’s two things we need to approve, the carryover amount, and we need to approve the prioritization of the projects.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: I think the amount we should leave out, perhaps, of the motion, because that amount could change, as Beth mentioned. I think it’s just the fact that the council understands that we are creating a request with proposed activities and other activities, as well as these contracts that we’re looking at that we’re going to provide to NOAA, and so that’s the important piece of it at this time, and so I don’t know that you need to put the value in the motion at this time, but perhaps -- Let me just go through these other carryover activities.

These don’t need to be prioritized, per se, but they were expensive, and I want to bring them to the council’s attention and see if there’s any questions or feedback on the best way forward with some of these things.

One of the things I wanted to talk about, and this is in Tab G, Number 4(a), that we were proposing to do, and this is in the other carryover activities line item, the $434,611 that we’re talking about here. One of the things we would like to do is develop a commercial fishing regulations mobile app, and we want to do this with the South Atlantic Council.

To develop that app, it would be through Fish Rules, and it would cost us $20,000, each council, and so we’re proposing to do that. Now, currently, we have the recreational Fish Rules app, and the commercial regulations are in there, but they’re buried, and so what we would like to do is kind of restructure the commercial fishing rules app and then just make the recreational one its own app, so that it’s at the forefront and there’s a difference there.
One of the ways that we’ve been talking to the developer about setting it up, in coordination with the South Atlantic Council staff, is that the commercial Fish Rules app potentially could be sorted by permit, species, and location, whereas maybe more species and location-specific for the recreational app.

One of the things that we would put, moving forward with this, for annual maintenance of this app, it would be $8,000 a year, and so that would show up in our annual budget, and so I wanted to discuss that with the council and put that on your radar.

The other thing, and maybe Emily can speak to this some more, that I think is really important with these apps, and I think to make them the best that we can and provide the best product to the user, is that all the Gulf states are involved and have a point of contact, because it will include state regulations as well in there, and so, to have the best and most current information, if we could work together to do that as well, and so I don’t think there necessarily has to be a charge to the states for that, but just providing a point of contact, to make it the best app that we can. I will stop there and see if there’s any questions on that, and then I will move on to the other activities.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Go ahead

MS. SUSAN BOGGS: Carrie, you said there’s an $8,000 annual maintenance fee, and is that per council, or is that divided between the two councils?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: That’s per council, correct?

MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN: Yes, that is per council, and it’s different than the fees associated with the recreational app. The recreational app, I think it’s a $4,000 charge for each agency that signs on to use that as their official app, per year, and this one is higher, because there will not be any ad revenue to sort of offset that, is what he was thinking, is that the universe of commercial anglers is much smaller than the universe of recreational anglers, and so he won’t be able to offset costs with ad revenue, and so it would be $8,000 per agency that signs onto it.

Right now, it’s just us and the South Atlantic that are talking about developing and sort of retaining creative control of it, but I think the idea is that, down the line, we would invite the states to also host their commercial regulations, and then they
would have this fee associated with that, if they wanted to.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Dr. Shipp.

DR. BOB SHIPP: I am just curious. Does this app include a
disclaimer? Most of these regulations that people put out,
there is always language at the bottom that you’re still
responsible for any changes. I hear that we’re going to update
it each year, but is there any disclaimer that these are
official or they’re not official?

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Emily, go ahead.

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: There are proper disclosures, and sort of the
way that it works, and just to give you guys an idea of the
current recreational app, if you are a state or an agency, like
us, that has signed on to host the app, I actually have control.
Since we have signed on to use Fish Rules as our official app,
they then designate a point person, and I have access to the
backend of the app, and, every time a regulation changes, I keep
it up-to-date in the moment.

Now, there are certain states, or certain other agencies, that
have not signed up with Fish Rules to make that an official app,
at which point the developer then takes responsibility for
keeping up with those regulations, and that’s sort of why Carrie
was suggesting that maybe we create a point person, or, if any
of the states feel like Fish Rules is the right way to go, to
actually sign-on, but, if there is a point person, at the very
least, that person can communicate with the developer and try
and make those regulations more appropriate, because they’re
hosting them anyway, and so they think the idea is, if we can
geret a point person from each agency to at least communicate, if
you’re not going to use it as your sort of number-one way to
communicate your regulations, then that will make the
information on the app more precise.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Dr. Simmons.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moving on
down to some of the other items, we need to work on -- What
we’re proposing here is improvements and planning for the
website. One of the things that we need to do, in order to meet
the United States Workforce Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for the
Section 508 compliance for limited vision or blindness and
deafness, as well as other disabilities, is to make our website
508 compliant, and we have developed a proposal and call for
contractors, and we’ve received several contractors to do this,
and so this was the maximum that we were looking at spending
doing this.

Then we also have a second item for the website that we need to
work on, which is moving -- We have a historical -- When we
first shifted our website over, many of you were on the council,
and we still have historical documents and materials on that
other domain, I guess, and so we need to shift that over to our
current website, and that’s going to take some work.

We also would like to develop a run book and best practices for
our staff and have this contractor do that as well, and so these
were the maximum values of these two projects that we put out,
and we have several proposals, and so we need to go back and go
through those and then select a contractor to do this work, but
this was the maximum amount that we were planning to spend to
make that happen with the website.

Then the final thing that we also need to do with the 508
compliance for documents is -- We’ve been working, moving
forward, to make our amendments and framework actions 508
complaint with the Regional Office, in order for them to be
accepted into the NOAA library, but we don’t have our historical
documents compliant with 508, and so what we would like to do is
get a contractor to also work on that, and we have several names
from the Regional Office that have also done some work, and so
we’re estimating the cost of that would be $35,000. That would
also include some of the joint documents.

Some of the earlier first FMPs, original FMPs, and Amendment 1,
we can’t make those 508 compliant without re-typing them. It’s
considered an undue burden, and so we won’t be able to go back
that far, but we’ll do the best we can with our recent documents
and going back in time, and we’ve worked out a pretty good list
with the Regional Office, and we’re estimating that cost will be
$35,000, and so I will stop there.

**MR. SPRAGGINS:** Dr. Simmons, on what you have proposed, I saw I
think there was three-hundred-and-something-thousand left over.
If there is any funds in it -- The question is, if it’s legal,
and I’m fairly new doing this, but is it legal to use any of
this to help promote something, as far as seafood safety? Is
that legal, for the council to use that to promote it?

What I’m talking about is, after this big disaster with the
Bonnet Carre and the other things that have happened, we have
seen a lot of issues in Mississippi and Louisiana and Alabama,
and I think Florida also has seen the same thing, where we are
having people questioning the seafood in the Gulf of Mexico, as to whether it’s safe, as far as bacteria and other things, and it’s going out all over America, and we see signs of -- People put a sign up and said we do not serve seafood from the Mississippi Gulf coast, or we don’t serve seafood from the Gulf of Mexico, because they are concerned about it. Is there something that we could look at? Is that legal or not?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: I would have to defer to Mara, because we’re not involved with the FDA regulations, and so I’m not sure how we would do a seafood safety real-time --

MS. MARA LEVY: I don’t know, off the top of my head, and I don’t know what your constraints are either, in terms of what you do under your grant and such, and so we would have to look at specifically what you wanted to do and talk to the Grants Office and figure out whether that’s something that’s even within the scope of what your grant is for.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Dr. Simmons.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that’s a good point, and so keep in mind that these funds need to be for unforeseen things that have come up that have been planned in our last five-year grant, but we were unable to complete, and that’s what you will see in the carryover activities line, and then that line item I just went through is the $434,611, and so now the next part of this is getting into the anticipated unexpended funds, which we have nine contracts that various staff members have put together that I wanted to walk the council through that we’re proposing to use that remaining funding for, and we’re asking you to prioritize those, as Mr. Dyskow said. Would you like me to go through those?

MR. SPRAGGINS: Yes, and, once again, I was just bringing it up as a point, and I’m not sure whether -- From what you just told me, it’s probably not even legal in this part, and so I will withdraw that.

DR. TOM FRAZER: General Spraggins, just thinking about that, I mean, it’s obviously a big issue for the Gulf states, and we can look and pursue it a little bit, but I would think it might be part of the communications plan, as opposed to one of the specific projects that Carrie is going to go over next.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Dr. Simmons, go ahead with that list.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL CONTRACTUAL PROJECTS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is Tab G, Number 5. These are in order of the lead PIs, alphabetical order, under last name. This doesn’t currently have any priority to it. What I am trying to do here is just give you an overview of each of the projects that we have to look through.

We are anticipating being able to fund at least four of them, at around $75,000, and I think there’s some flexibility in that final number, and so what I plan to do is work with the Chair and see if there is other projects we can fund, $5,000 and $6,000, depending on where those final contracts land with the other activities that I just went over in the previous document.

The first project is evaluation of dolphin acoustic deterrent devices as a method to reduce reef fish depredation rates in the Gulf of Mexico, and that’s proposed by Dr. Judd Curtis and other co-authors with the Harte Research Institute.

The overall goal of this project is to characterize regulatory discards while estimating instantaneous and post-release mortalities attributed to depredation and to determine if acoustic deterrent devices currently used in commercial net fisheries could be a tool to reduce discard mortality in Gulf of Mexico reef fish fisheries. I think this is going to be focused on the western Gulf, I believe, and it’s going to work with the charter fleet, and they are requesting $90,000 for this project. Let’s go to the next one. Again, I’m just providing a brief overview.

Project B, the next one, is increasing availability and understanding of reef fish descender devices, and this is Dr. Marcus Drymon at Mississippi State University and Mississippi- Alabama Sea Grant.

The purpose of this project would be to distribute 500 fish descenders, and they’re looking at using SeaQualizers, to Mississippi recreational fishermen through the Department of Marine Resources, using the Tails ‘n Scales Program, and develop and disseminate a short instructional video to detail the proper use of these devices. I believe this is focused on the north central Gulf, based on this project, and they are requesting $75,000 for this.

The next project is understanding the population dynamics of adult red drum, and this is Dr. Marcus Drymon and Sean Powers, Dr. Sean Powers, at Mississippi State University and
Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant and the University of South Alabama, and these studies are needed to determine the age composition for spawning red drum in federal waters.

This project’s goal would fill a critical gap using samples and data already in hand, and it would provide an index of relative abundance for adult red drum in offshore waters, such as sex-specific age and growth parameters, and they’re estimating they could do that for 1,000 individuals. Estimates of mortality and general habitat suitability maps, and, again, I think this is focused on the north central Gulf.

Assessing the influence of sargassum habitat on greater amberjack recruitment in the Gulf of Mexico, and this is Dr. Frank Hernandez and Dr. Verena Wang at the Division of Coastal Sciences and the University of South Alabama.

These efforts will be concentrated on assessing the relationship between these sargassum indices and gray triggerfish populations in the Gulf of Mexico. The proposed work will extend the application of project-developed sargassum indices to evaluate recruitment of the greater amberjack in the Gulf of Mexico, which are, as we know, federally managed and have been designated as overfished and undergoing overfishing. We know that this is also a priority for the council in our current research priorities, and so the amount requested for that is $75,000.

Exploring unexplained variability in stock-recruitment relationship estimates for the Gulf of Mexico greater amberjack stock with long-term ecological time series, that’s Dr. Joshua Kilborn at the University of South Florida. He is proposing to investigating the unexplained portion of the greater amberjack stock-recruitment relationship used for fishery management decisions in the Gulf of Mexico, as it’s described in the 2014 SEDAR assessment, and I believe this is Gulf-wide, this project is Gulf-wide, and it would help to better constrain the models used to estimate spawning stock biomass. He is requesting $85,000 for that one.

This F is the only socioeconomic project we have. The rest are biological and life history and tagging and movement studies, and this is a social network analysis of quota trading in the Gulf of Mexico IFQ fisheries, and this is Dr. Andrew Ropicki at the University of Florida, and he is proposing to employ a social network analysis to both the quota and landings markets in the Gulf of Mexico reef fish fishery programs, and so I think that’s the red snapper and the grouper-tilefish programs, to
examine connections between the quota and landings markets, evaluate regional differences in the quota market and how the quota market has changed since IFQ implementation, the role and influence of dealers in the quota market, how IFQ management has affected the spatial distribution of the fishery and the Gulf working waterfront communities, with emphasis on the role of quota trading in the fishery following external shocks, such as oil spills, red tide events, and hurricanes. I believe this is a Gulf-wide study, and he is requesting $76,000.

G is movement patterns and discard mortality of cobia in the Gulf of Mexico, and this is Dr. Matt Streich at the Harte Research Institute in the Gulf of Mexico and other co-authors. The overall goal of this project is to provide new information on movement, stock structure, and discard mortality of cobia captured in the Gulf recreational hook-and-line fishery using advanced tagging technology, and so they would look at seasonal movement of cobia, the mixing between the western Gulf and Mexico, and estimate discard mortality for cobia in the recreational hook-and-line fishery. They are requesting $92,500 for that project.

The next one is habitat estimates and the comparative habitat value of artificial reefs and natural banks for Gulf of Mexico greater amberjack and gray triggerfish, and that’s Dr. Greg Stunz and other co-authors at the Harte Research Institute, and the overall goal of this study is to obtain greatly needed abundance and distribution information for greater amberjack and gray triggerfish, through a combination of video surveys and bioacoustic or hydroacoustic surveys of artificial reef and natural banks.

It would use -- They have already gathered this data, and I think they’re just going to analyze it based on the Great Red Snapper Count that has already been conducted, and this is going to be Gulf-wide, I believe, because they are going to look at regional differences, and they are requesting $75,000 for this project.

The final project, and this is the ninth project we have, is the density estimates of age-zero and age-one gray triggerfish and vermilion snapper from 2007 to 2015, and this is the north central Gulf, and the objective is to quantify and analyze and report on two important species, which I mentioned gray triggerfish and vermilion snapper, that showed high recruitment densities on patch reefs, the same patch reefs, over this time series, and they would analyze this information and provide information on recruitment patterns before and after the oil
spill and the changes in the sargassum distribution as well. They are requesting $75,000 for this project, and it would be in the north central Gulf.

What we’re asking for is the committee and council to prioritize these projects. We are confident that we could fund at least four of these, and perhaps more, depending on where things fall with the contracts that we have for the website and other things that we have going on, and we feel these are all helpful and would contribute to the council’s mission and management and would be able to fall within our current or previous last five-year grant.

After the council prioritizes these and makes a selection, what we would do is develop a contract timeline and deliverables with that PI, and then, at the end of this year -- This project has to be completed by the end of 2020, and we would ask for a report and/or presentation that would come before the council, probably in the spring of 2020. I will stop there.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Thank you, Dr. Simmons. Chairman Frazer, we have a couple of ways to go on this. We can either have lengthy discussion that would go beyond our timeframe to go through these one-by-one and weigh the merits, or we could perhaps give this information to the Full Council members in paper form and have them actually rank these in ballot form and then use that as our final prioritization. That would be a Full Council activity.

If you agree with that, we really have two things we can do, as a committee. Since the carryover budget number hasn’t been fully quantified at this time, at this point in the year, I think we can entertain a committee motion to approve the carryover budget direction, as stated by staff, so that they can start doing some planning in that regard.

Then the second item would be to recommend that these nine projects be prioritized by each individual council member and that be tabulated to form the final priority of projects that we have, and so I guess what we’re asking people to do, Dr. Simmons, is vote for four, or do we want them to just prioritize them all?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: I would suggest prioritizing them all, because we may be able to fund five, or perhaps even go back to someone and have six, but I think what we could do is send out like a survey, and then we would have to discuss at Full Council the projects and their priority, I think in open
session, before we left the council meeting, so that we could put that into our carryover request, and I think that we would have to do that publicly after we get the survey back.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Okay, and so do you want the survey to be electronic or paper?

DR. FRAZER: Mara, do you want to weigh-in on this, real quick?

MS. LEVY: I think, whatever you do, the results by individual need to be made public. Meaning, I don’t think the council members can rank things and there be a private tally of the results. If you want to post what the rankings are, fine, but I think whatever happens needs to be fully transparent and public, and I will also note that a couple of these projects have a council member as a PI, and, to that extent, that person should be recused from any discussion or voting. The regulations in the Code of Conduct section basically say, if you have -- I have them here.

It says that no council member should participate as a member through decision approval, disapproval, recommendation, rendering of advice in a particular matter, primarily of individual concern, such as a contract, in which she or he has a financial interest. To the extent this is ranking the council’s priorities for contracts, it’s probably something that requires a recusal, in that instance.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Dr. Stunz.

DR. GREG STUNZ: Thanks for recognizing me. I’m not on your committee, Mr. Dyskow, but, as one of those individuals that you’re talking about, Mara, I fully plan to abstain from the discussion and voting on this, for the record.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Emily, you had your hand up?

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: I just wanted to say that, if we did decide to go electronically, we can create a Google Doc that will track each member’s vote, and we can have that done for you by the end of the day.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: What would be the Chairman’s pleasure on this?

DR. FRAZER: I agree that I think that it would be appropriate to move forward with a motion to approve the carryover spend plan, and I don’t have any problem with that. I think that it’s okay as well to generate an electronic kind of ranking of the
projects that we can bring to the Full Council, and we can have further discussion then. My question right now is whether or not there is a need for any initial discussion on these projects prior to actually ranking them, and so I would expect that there are a few questions at this point that we could entertain, for sure.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Well, let’s divide this into -- I’m sorry. Leann.

MS. LEANN BOSARGE: Well, if we were going to discuss the projects that we just talked about, I actually -- There was one that I would like to add for discussion, and I can’t make the motion, but I’m just going to bring it up as discussion, but there was a motion that came out of our AP, our Coral AP, joint meeting that we had, and it was a motion from the Shrimp AP, and it had to do with Kemp’s ridley turtles and wanting some more research on those.

The new five-year bi-op is coming up, and they’re going to start that pretty soon, and we’ve seen some bouncing up and down of the nesting on the beaches in Mexico, and the Shrimp AP -- There was an assessment done on those Kemp’s ridley somewhere between five and ten years ago, and so it is time to look at that information again.

It does have ramifications for all of our fishermen. As you know, we’re all held accountable for that, and so I would like that to be a research priority, research and possible stock assessment on the Kemp’s ridley turtle, and so I just throw that out there for discussion, because I’m not on your committee.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Susan Boggs.

MS. BOGGS: I think this is directed to Carrie, and please help me remember, but how did we come about these projects? Is this something the council solicited, or is this just something that’s kind of been out there? It kind of brings it back to Leann and saying, hey, let’s look at this.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Since we really didn’t have a strong idea of how much money we were going to have, I asked all technical staff to provide at least one project, contact various universities or others, and several staff provided more than one contract for the council to review that was within our priorities and that we thought we could get done at the end of 2020, because it’s not like you can go out and do a long-term research project with one year of funding, and so that was the
other thing we had to keep in mind.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Mr. Swindell.

MR. ED SWINDELL: Did these projects come about through any kind of public notice out to universities or so forth, in order to get applications in for a project?

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Dr. Simmons.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: No, we did not do that. Now, if there is a project that -- I think it’s $100,000 or more, or $99,999, and if it’s of that cost, then, yes, we would have to make it competitive and open.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Dr. Frazer.

DR. FRAZER: I would imagine there might be other projects that would be added to this list, and I think, if you move forward in the direction that you’re intending to move forward, with approving an intended spend plan for the carryover funds, that would allow us some flexibility to perhaps identify new projects or generate some ideas that could be completed in the timeframe, and so, along those lines, I would ask -- For example, with regard to the Kemp’s ridley assessment, I would imagine, Clay, that that would be done in your shop, and is that correct?

DR. CLAY PORCH: It could be. Actually, I just sent an email to my staff, to see what that would entail and if we have any more information than just beach counts.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Mr. Donaldson.

MR. DAVE DONALDSON: Along those lines, the assessment that Leann referred to was actually done by LGL Associates, Benny Gallaway, and we actually have an estimate to redo that, because that was something that we were interested in seeing, because there is some interesting information about the nesting, and we thought that redoing the assessment would be useful, and so we could probably do -- If we used Benny and his folks, we could probably do just an update of that assessment for about $50,000, and that’s just FYI.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Dr. Simmons.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just keep in mind that we have to turn around -- Beth, I don’t know if you’re still on the webinar, but I think it’s the end of this
month that we have to include all of this in our carryover request to NOAA, I believe, or early November, and I can’t remember what the date is, and so we have a very limited time on this, and so that’s probably why it seems rushed, but it is rushed.

**MS. HAGER:** We actually have to submit that no later than sixty days before the end of our current award, which is December 31, and so we have until October 31 to submit the finalized contracts, completely negotiated, and with any cost justification, if it’s a sole-source contract.

**CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Kevin.

**MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I’m not on your committee, but just to follow-up on the Kemp’s ridley assessment. I was on the side, and I was listening into a conversation that I was having with folks in Alabama regarding the NRDA trustee work that we do, and there was a discussion of turtles, and assessments came up, and I thought I heard that NOAA was going to be conducting an assessment, and I don’t know if it was on Kemp’s ridley or another species, but I thought they were, and so that might be something else we want to just confirm, is that there isn’t something already planned through NRDA.

**CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Mr. Donaldson.

**MR. DONALDSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Kevin, along those lines, we actually talked to the NRDA folks about funding an updated assessment, and it didn’t fall within -- At least under the protected resources turtle pot of money, it didn’t fall under their priorities, and that doesn’t mean that they’re not going to fund it through some other pot, but, at least through that avenue, they were not interested.

**CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Dr. Simmons, since there seems to be some interest in this, and I have noted that there aren’t any shrimp-related activities on this list at this time, would it be possible to add this prior to preparing the electronic vote assessment? In other words, could the scope of this be defined enough to add to the list prior to our ranking?

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you. I think we could do that, but I would ask if, I guess, if Dr. Gallaway, who is going to do this work, that we request that by Full Council that he provide something like you have in front of you for the Full Council to look at and an estimate of cost in writing, because,
like I said, again, we’ve got to turn around and put this in our carryover request to NOAA and develop contracts with these folks like ASAP when we get back.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Mr. Donaldson.

MR. DONALDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe that I can talk with staff and we can get something to you as soon as possible.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: I am not trying to put you on the spot, but what do you mean by as soon as possible, because we’re trying to put this ranking document together.

MR. DONALDSON: Today, hopefully. I say that with an asterisk, and let me talk to staff. I mean, we have a full proposal from Benny, but it’s a lot more than $50,000, because there was a lot of other additional things that he was trying to do, but let me talk with him, and I think we can get something to you. It’s a definite maybe. How about that?

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Okay. Getting back to the two things that we need to do, I would entertain a motion to approve the budget carryover direction, as described by staff, at this time.

MR. SPRAGGINS: I will make that motion.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Thank you, General Spraggins. Do we have a second? We have a second. Is there any opposition to this? Mr. Donaldson.

MR. DONALDSON: No opposition, but just a clarification. That’s the $150,000 of that first part that was presented for the update of the website and -- Is that what you’re talking about?

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: What we’re talking about is they have to have this project completed by the end of October, and so we’re approving the direction that they’ve presented here, and then the other issue that we talked about, the prioritization of these additional projects, we’re going to handle that separately, and we’re going to have an electronic vote, and so this is merely to approve the budget direction as presented by staff at this meeting, the carryover budget direction.

MR. DONALDSON: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Susan Boggs.

MS. BOGGS: I may be late in asking this question, and I do
apologize, but, under the other carryover activities, which, as Mr. Donaldson mentioned, is only $150,000, and so you have $434,000 in your other carryover activities, and so, if you’re only spending $150,000, would that then go into these projects, or am I misunderstanding?

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: I will let staff answer that question.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Beth, are you still on there? I think that was for equipment and some other things. Could you explain that, please?

MS. HAGER: The other carryover activities that Carrie highlighted here are just a portion of them. In addition to those activities that she mentioned, we do have a request in for the SEFHIER activity, that that won’t be able to be completed in this year, and so that’s going to have to be carried over into next year.

We have the request to hire a fishery outreach specialist, and so that and all of the associated costs are included in that, and then carrying over some staff time, hopefully, to work on these activities as well, and so we do have 8 percent in there to help offset some of the work that is going to need to actually be done in 2020, and so that is carryover as well, and so all of those activities are what we have that total the $434,611.

What we’re looking at for these other projects is around $300,000, but, as Carrie mentioned before, that is completely dependent on how much funds we have remaining in our actual operating activity, and so, if we have a meeting canceled between now and the end of the year, that number is going to go up.

If something else changes, potentially, between now and December, that funds remaining number is going to change, which is why we’re looking for the ranking, and we realize that those contracts are much higher than the funds we have available, but we just need to get an idea of the direction to go in. Does that answer it?

MS. BOGGS: Yes, Beth. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Once again, within this motion, all we are doing as a committee is approving the overall direction of the budget carryover provisions that they have discussed today, and so we’re just approving the direction that they’re taking,
realizing that some of these numbers are not specific and finite
at this early stage, but they have to present their plan by the
end of this month, the 31st, and today is the 21st. We have a
motion and a second to approve that budget carryover direction.
Is there any opposition? It not, the motion carries.

The second item that we need to take some action on is this
prioritization of these nine projects, or potentially ten
projects, if we add the shrimp project to the list. I would
like to ask Emily to describe how this is going to transpire.

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: I am sorry. I was trying to build the survey.
Are we talking about this ranking?

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: We are talking about that survey. What I
asked specifically was how is this prioritization going to
transpire?

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: Okay, and so what I am going to try and do is,
much like you just did your committee rankings, I will send you
an email with a link that will send you to a Google Doc, and it
will look a lot like the link that you used to rank your
committee selections.

Once that is sent out, I will let you guys know, and we can
indicate that, and then you will just simply go in, and you will
prioritize, just like you did for the committees, and then I
will have a report that I can then deliver to you before Full
Council.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Is it your intent to send this to the full
council?

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: I would like direction on that.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Well, I think we should send it to the full
council. Then what we can do as a committee is, without going
to a motion, we can simply state that a budget or an activity or
carryover -- I will start over. A carryover activity list will
be sent to the full council to be prioritized when we were are
in full session, I guess on Thursday or Wednesday.

DR. Frazer: Okay. I think that’s appropriate.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: All right. Let’s proceed with that. I will
try to wordsmith that again. A carryover project prioritization
will be prepared for the full council to take action on on
Wednesday, I guess. Does that make sense, or should I try to
get more specific? We won’t have a motion at the committee level, but we will ask that this be discussed at Full Council, when we have the actual input from the council members.

That’s the last real action item that we have, and I guess we can go to Other Business. Is there any other business that needs to be presented to this committee? Susan, it looks like you’re raising your hand.

**MS. BOGGS:** Well, I am, because I am confused. Do we need to make a motion to instruct Emily, or were you just basically stating that --

**CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** No, we don’t. We’re not going to take this to motion at the committee level. We are going to take it to motion at Full Council, after Full Council gets to weigh-in on the prioritization of these projects. Kevin.

**MR. ANSON:** Thank you, again, and I’m not on your committee, but Chairman Frazer recommended there be some discussion, I guess, and I’m not on your committee, and so, if the committee doesn’t want to have any discussion on the specific topics prior to making the vote, then that’s fine, but I just wanted to see if that was still needed or not.

**CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Thanks, Kevin. We certainly can have that discussion now, but I think the committee’s desire is to get Full Council input as well, and so we can do this in two stages if you like.

We can have discussion at the committee level, or we can wait until we have a weigh-in from the Full Council, and I see Susan has her hand up, and she is on the committee, and so, from my position, we can do this either way, as long as Chairman Frazer will give us the time to have that discussion, because we’re running on nine o’clock, and we have in the agenda until 9:15, and so I guess we have some time for some discussion. I am going to recognize Susan, because she had her hand up.

**MS. BOGGS:** The question that I would have, with regard to the majority of these contracts, is how do they play into stock assessments? Is this something that, if we -- The evaluation of dolphin acoustics, just because that’s what I’m looking at, I mean, I would like to know, and maybe this is a question for Clay, how will these play into stock assessments, because I think we want to spend our money wisely, on something that we can actually use and maybe prioritize based on the stock assessments that are coming up, because we’re always talking
about we need more data and better data, and that’s how I would try to look at it.

**CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Well, that’s a valid point. I am going to let Dr. Simmons weigh-in on this, because I believe that -- I don’t know that we can fund stock assessments through this carryover. I don’t know that we can’t.

**DR. FRAZER:** I am just going to go ahead real quick and make some suggestions. I think there are certainly two opportunities for the council to weigh-in on these topics. We could have some discussion now to entertain some questions, some clarifying types of questions, but I think, with regard to prioritization as an individual, you will be free to kind of rank the projects as you see fit, with regard to your priorities, and I think, as a council, we could then have further discussion about how those priorities might fall out, given everybody’s input, and so I think it’s okay to ask that question, for example, with regard to how does one of the first projects, for example, that you referenced and how does it play into a stock assessment. You could ask Clay, for example, or other people that might be around the table that have knowledge of the project.

**CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Once again, Susan.

**MS. BOGGS:** To clarify, just kind of do that offline, for me to have a better understanding? I mean, I’m asking just as a general question of all of these, and I just happened to be looking at one of those.

If we chose any of these contractual projects, no matter what it is, is this something that’s going to be useful to the Science Center in future stock assessments? That’s just kind of a general question, or are we just doing this to find out that this is what is happening and it will have no effect on stock assessments?

**CHAIRMAN DYSKOW:** Dr. Simmons, would you like to handle that?

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I will give it a shot. I think we’re trying to do both, but, until we get results, I’m not sure that -- Until you are at the assessment for that particular species, perhaps for let’s say for greater amberjack, the study that’s looking at that, that that will in fact be able to use that information, and I think it has to be ready and available for perhaps that data workshop or operational assessment or research track or wherever we are with that assessment, and it has to be vetted by the SSC panel and analyzed, in order to
decide if it’s going to be put into the assessment.

I guess my suggestion would be to think about the species we
have data gaps for, which I think many of the species that we
have before you we do have large data gaps in, and the hope is
that this would be helpful for management and would be
informative to the stock assessments, and I will let Dr. Porch
give us more feedback.

DR. PORCH: Thank you. A lot of it is going to depend on the
details, and so I haven’t seen the detailed proposals here,
which, ideally, we would have some level of technical review,
and that’s exactly what they would be responding to, is they
would look at it and say, okay, the coverage is too small, or
maybe it’s just right or whatever, all the details, because,
when it goes to a stock assessment, that’s exactly what they are
going to look at.

If you did a mortality rate study, is it just one little reef,
and so it’s not really representative of anything other than
that reef, or does it represent the whole Gulf of Mexico, and
those sorts of things are going to come up, and so,
specifically, when we just scrolled through them, there is
certainly -- Almost all of them contribute in some way that’s
useful, assuming they were done correctly, but I can’t comment
on that until I see all the details of the proposal.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: I guess where I’m a little unclear is should
stock assessment be the only criteria for evaluating these
projects? I think these projects have value beyond merely their
contribution to stock assessments. Ms. Boggs.

MS. BOGGS: To that point, I’m just asking is this something
that can be used for, and I’m not saying that’s how we
prioritize it or how I’m going to prioritize it, but I just
wanted to know if these projects are something that can be
looked at being used in a stock assessment. I am just trying to
get my mind wrapped around what other uses is it going to have.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Those are fair comments. Any other
discussion? Mr. Swindell.

MR. SWINDELL: I am not a member of your committee, but I guess
I’m a little concerned. I think one of the things the council
has been struggling with --

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Actually, you are a member of the committee,
sir.
MR. SWINDELL: Okay. Well, one of the things, over time, that we’ve been struggling with electronic reporting. If there is one thing that I would like to see money spent on, it’s to get the electronic reporting up and running as fast as we can, and I don’t see anything in the proposals here that are going to get that done, and whether or not it’s the right time to do it, and I don’t know if it’s all with Dr. Porch and his group or just where it is, but I just know that I keep hearing economics is a problem with getting electronic reporting underway. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Dr. Simmons.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree, Mr. Swindell. The problem we have with this funding and these very short projects is it’s only one year that we can fund them for, and I think that that work is going to take many more years, and there is already other federal dollars being put forth to work on that.

I do want to say, in our carryover activities, in the half-million-dollar line item that you saw, we have a contract with the Regional Office and their staff to continue to do workshops and develop materials for the for-hire electronic monitoring program, and we are continuing to work with them on that, and, because that has been delayed, that is going to be carried over to 2020 now, and that will be in our request.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Thank you. I think one of the things we’re struggling with here is what is the criteria for these non-budgeted carryover projects, and we all have had good ideas going forward, and Susan has brought up some key points, as has Ed, as have others, and maybe, for future carryover project discussions, we can have some broad criteria under which they fall, so that we don’t have this type of digression in the future and that we are more clear as to what are the provisions under which these carryover-budget-funded projects are determined.

If that discussion is now completed, we can go on to Other Business, if there is any. If there is no other business, I would entertain a motion to close the committee.

MR. SPRAGGINS: Motion.

CHAIRMAN DYSKOW: Do we have a second? We have a motion and a second to close the Administrative/Budget Committee meeting, slightly ahead of time. If there is no opposition, Mr.
Chairman, I will hand it back to you.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on October 21, 2019.)

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