

Tab G, No 4

Below is an excerpt from the **South Atlantic Council's Administrative Handbook**, page 31. This language was discussed during the May 12, 2020 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council webinar.

D. Webinar Council Meeting and Limited Exemption

The Council welcomes use of webinar meetings to increase transparency and efficiency while reducing costs of conducting meeting in person. The Council prefers in-person meetings with the ability to freely discuss and exchange information. However, budget and time constraints may require more use of webinar meetings. The Council supports the continued use of webinar meetings for Council meetings (and committee meetings if needed), primarily to address specific issues that are time sensitive.

The Council supports a limited exemption for Council members to participate and vote during an in-person meeting if they are participating via webinar. The Council Chair, Vice Chair, and Executive Director will evaluate requests for an exemption for Council members to participate and vote during an in-person meeting if they are participating via webinar.

NOTE: The verbiage below is currently in the Gulf Council's SOPPs and includes changes made during the May 12, 2020 Council meeting. The blue text indicates suggested changes from staff for Council Consideration.

3.0 Council Meetings

The Council will meet at the call of the Council Chair or upon request of a majority of its voting members. Meetings will ordinarily be held in plenary sessions, but may be in subgroups or in individual sessions.

The presiding officer at any Council meeting will be the Council Chair, Council Vice Chair, or in their absences, a member of the Council elected by the voting members present to serve as temporary Chair.

Council members must be physically present at Council meetings in order to present a motion or vote, unless approved to do so remotely by a majority decision of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Executive Director.

All participants are to keep electronic devices on silent or vibrating mode during Council meetings.

The procedural guidelines of Section 302(i)(2) of the Act (as amended) shall apply to the conduct of business at the meetings of the Council, APs, and SSCs.

Staff Suggested Text for Review:

The Council prefers in-person meetings with the ability to freely discuss and exchange information and interact with the public. However, health, budgetary, and/or time constraints may require virtual participation of a Council member when an in-person Council meeting is held. Therefore, Council members must be physically present at in-person Council meetings in order to present a motion or vote, unless approved to do so remotely by a majority decision of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Executive Director.

NOTE: The verbiage for section 3.6 Location below is currently in the Gulf Council's SOPPs. These are additional suggested changes for Council consideration. The blue text indicates suggested changes from staff for Council Consideration.

3.6 Location

The Council meetings will ordinarily be held within the five state geographical area. However, if the Council determines that the best interests of the work of the Council, its committees, advisory groups or panels, in joint management actions with other Councils, will be better served, meetings may be held outside of the five state area, particularly in any of the constituent states affected by a joint management plan. Public access will be given primary consideration in meeting plans. The Council Chair with input from staff will select the meeting sites for the Council with the understanding that members are given adequate advance notice.

Staff Suggested Text for Review:

The Council prefers holding in-person meetings; however, national emergencies, health pandemics, natural catastrophes, budgetary, and time sensitive issues may require the use of remote meeting technologies. In these rare cases, the Council is prepared to hold virtual meetings using alternative technologies for committee and Council meetings. Members of the public will be given the opportunity to provide written and/or verbal comments during virtual meetings of the full Council.