

**Administrative / Budget Committee Report
June 21, 2021
Mr. Phil Dyskow – Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab G, No. 1**) as written and approved the minutes (**Tab G, No. 2**) of the January 2021 meeting as written.

Review and approval of the Final Funded 2021 Budget (Tab G, No. 4)

In Tab G, number 4, staff presented the initial draft 2021 budget alongside the draft funded 2021 budget. The total funding received for the second year of the five-year award, was \$3,904,100. The total received is \$99,200 less than the original budget estimate and included the reduction of the \$94,000 which was sent to the Southeast Region (SERO) in support of the permit software update.

Most of the costs presented in the initial draft budget remain unchanged other than lines relating to meetings and contractual services. Meeting related costs were revised to account for the meetings which have been held virtually to date and a slight reduction in the number of anticipated public hearing activities since travel is just being resumed. In addition to the decreases, allowances were increased due to the considerable uncertainty in the actual costs that may be realized through the remainder of the year as airfares, rental car costs, and hotel rates are surging due to increased demand. The stipend and meeting room cost estimates were increased to adjust for anticipated activity and rising room rental costs as in person meetings are resuming and space costs are increasing.

The Contractual costs were adjusted by a net of \$68,000 which included the \$94,000 was removed from this line since it was funded to SERO directly from the treasury. Added to this line, were the stipends for contracting independent reviewers involved in the Great Red Snapper Count review at the March SSC meeting (at \$30,000) and \$4,000 for technology services to help ensure the Council can meet NOAAs electronic records keeping requirements towards the end of the year.

The Committee recommends, and I so move: **to approve the final funded 2021 budget.**

Motion carried with none opposed.

Expanded Sampling and Ageing Study on Gulf of Mexico Gray Triggerfish, with SSC Recommendations (Tab G, No. 5a)

In response to the January 2021 request from the Council, staff presented a draft call for proposals to obtain data which would decrease data gaps in the research track assessment of Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) gray triggerfish, that is currently scheduled to begin in 2024. The proposed project would require a contractor to evaluate techniques to efficiently sample, process, and utilize different ageing structures (i.e., spines and otoliths) for gray triggerfish in the Gulf and would require funding of \$250,000 from the 2020 unexpended funds. The contractor would have 24 months to complete the project to conduct the expanded sampling and ageing study. Staff

reviewed a draft of the request for proposals for this project and incorporated comments from the science center, the grant coordinator, and the Scientific and Statistic Committee (SSC). The Committee was asked to review this revised draft to determine if the funding amount and scope of work should be approved for solicitation of a competitive call for proposals.

The Committee recommends, and I so move: **to fund the Expanded Sampling and Ageing Study on Gulf of Mexico Gray Triggerfish, with SSC Recommendations**

Motion carried with none opposed.

Shrimp ELB Program (Tab G, No. 5b)

In response to the January 2021 request from Council, staff presented a draft request for project proposals to select a contractor to organize and expand a vessel effort monitoring system for the federally permitted Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry. The intention of this study is to test a suitable software program with a portion of the shrimp fleet in the near term to determine if it meets the needs of industry, Council, and the NMFS Science Center. The term of this work would be 12-18 months and would require funding up to \$350,000, which would come from the Council's unexpended 2020 funds. The committee did not vote on this action and elected to continue discussions during the full Council session.

Modification of SOPPs for SSC Voting Practices (Tab G, No. 6)

Staff presented a draft document intended to address the peer review responsibilities and to document best voting practices for the SSC. The Committee reviewed the document. A committee member offered to share a document about the peer review process from the South Atlantic Council for consideration of additional material to include. Staff will continue to revise the document and plans to discuss it with the SSC members during the August 3-5, 2021 meeting.

NMFS Fishery Management Council Financial Disclosure and Recusal (Tab G, No. 7)

This was an informational presentation of NMFS Draft Policy 01-116 and NMFS Draft Procedure 01-116-01. These documents are intended to provide policy guidance on the review of financial disclosures submitted by members of the SSCs and by appointed members of the Fishery Management Councils, as well as the preparation and issuance of recusal determinations. Responsive to these new procedures, the completed statement of financial interest forms of the SSC members will now be posted online on the Council website.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.