

**Administrative / Budget Committee Report
June 24, 2024
General Joe Spraggins – Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab G, No. 1**) as written. The minutes (**Tab G, No. 2**) of the January 2024 committee meeting were approved with an amendment to page 5, line 16 correcting “Bog” to “Bob”.

Discussion of Proposed Modifications to the Statement of Organization Practices and Procedures (SOPPs) (Tab G, No. 4)

In reviewing the proposed verbiage to update Section 2.5.3, Council and committee members inquired about the language differences between meetings of SSCs and volunteers of the Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR) process. Staff clarified that the proposed verbiage states a 30-day advance notification requirement for attendance changes of SEDAR participants because those meetings require significant external coordination. The 14-day advance notice for confirmation of attendance at SSC meetings allows the Council to ensure that we remain in compliance with attrition requirements in contracted hotel rooms and the opportunity to obtain better rates for travel and lodging. Staff noted that the language includes a statement that the Council will work with members who encounter extenuating circumstances, Overall, the goal in this section is to provide clarification of the preferred policies as several committees are being repopulated at this meeting.

NOAA General Counsel staff noted that the proposed language seemed to be prescriptive, but acknowledged the intention that the Council is to balance the desire for in-person participation with the ability to make exceptions in certain circumstances. A member suggested softening the statements by altering “will” and “must” to “should”. Staff will confer with NOAA General Counsel staff and bring the revised draft language for Sections 2.5.3 and 2.6.3 for review during the full Council. The three points to be addressed are: 1) recording the current practice in the policies, 2) confirming the idea that holding in-person meetings is a priority for the Council, and 3) clarifying that there is an optimal defined timeline for advanced notification needed for meeting planning purposes. Please review the proposed updates to Sections 2.5.3 and 2.6.3 for the Council’s discussion.

The next section discussed was the addition of language in Section 3.8 as requested by NOAA to comply with federal regulations.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Council accept the proposed changes to the SOPPs in Section 3.8 Council Member Compensation.

In accordance with 50 CFR 600.245(c), the Executive Director of the Council must submit to the Regional Office annually a report, approved by the Council Chair, of Council member compensation authorized. This report shall identify, for each member, amount paid, dates, and location and purpose of meetings attended.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Discussion continued on proposed changes to Section 4.8.1 under the Anti-Harassment policy. A member asked if the policy is intended to prevent the appointment of members who do not complete the training. Staff stated that the only change proposed was to include technical committee members for completeness. It was stated by a member that the intention appears to be to integrate the training during the onboarding of new committee members. Staff confirmed that the current process is to ensure that members complete training by the first time they attend a meeting.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, **that the Council accept the proposed addition to Training in Section 4.8.1 of the SOPPs.**

Anti-Harassment Training should be completed at the time of appointment or reappointment of Council Members, SSC members, ~~and~~ AP members, and technical committee members. State Directors and their designees should complete anti-harassment training every three years and at the time of appointment.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Status Update on Inflation Reduction Act Funding for the Regional Fishery Management Councils

Staff provided an informational update on the current position of this proposal. Clarifications and responses to specific questions on the Phase II activities were submitted to NOAA Fisheries in June 2024. Dr. Verena Wang was hired to fill the role of Ecosystem Analyst. She is currently serving as a temporary Fishery Biologist until the Council receives funding for Phase I of the project.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.