SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Webinar

October 26, 2026

Transcript

Executive Committee

Jessica McCawley, Chair
Dr. Carolyn Belcher
Amy W. Dukes

Council Staff

John Carmichael
Myra Brouwer
Dr. Chip Collier
Kathleen Howington
Dr. Judd Curtis
John Hadley
Allie Iberle
Kelly Klasnick
Dr. Mike Schmidtke
Suzanna Thomas
Christina Curtis

Attendees and Invited Participants

Rick DeVictor
Lara Klibansky

Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Executive Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened via webinar on Monday, October 26, 2026, and was called to order by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I guess we are going to go back to the budget for review, and so I will pass it back to you, Kelly and John.

MR. KLASNICK: All right. Thank you. All right, guys. Thanks to everybody who could join us here today. We're going to be taking a walk through the budget review documents, and so I'll just point out a couple of your attachments that you might want to take a look at as we're moving through the presentation here today.

The one that I've got on the screen right now is the budget summary table. Just to orient everybody to this Attachment 2b, on the left-hand side, you have the primary expense categories outlined. The next column over, we have the 2026 budget as it was approved by the council. We have a 2027 budget column, which we'll be talking about today in more detail.

Moving over to the right, you have this expended through 9/30/2026 column, which will give you kind of the current expenses that the council has accumulated up through that 9/30 reporting date for the briefing materials, and then the last column is going to be your -- Just the percentages in each one of those categories and where we are at, and so at a high level, by looking at this table, you can see our 2026 budget was in at about $4.5 million.

2027, based on the outcome of this discussion, is anticipated to be slightly less, a little under what we had approved for 2026, and we've expended about 60 percent of our budget through the 9/30 timeframe, and so the long and short is we're in good shape as far as our pace of expenditures go relative to the budget that was outlined for us.

All right, and so, recapping 2026 in a little bit more detail, we had budgeted at $4.5 million. Our funding came in at $4.43 million. I will point out, however, that there were some one-time augmentations to that 2026 number that led to that 7.9 percent increase. Without those one-time augmentations -- One was for some executive order augmentation, and then there was some smaller amounts for some special projects.

Without those one-time augmentations, we were looking at a funding figure of about $4.15 million, which was just a little over a 1 percent increase from the previous year. I had mentioned that we have spent through 60 percent, which, for a September timeframe, you know, I'm very comfortable with the spend rate, and, as we know, our variability in our budget is primarily driven by the travel, and the meetings that we conduct, and how those actually play out relative to how we had planned those based on what we knew at the time.

A couple of the key other cost categories that we encounter each year, and our healthcare renewal ended up coming in at about 3.7 percent, which we fortunately were able to negotiate down from an almost 8 percent increase, and that's always a wildcard every year. You know, we do our best to try to keep those costs as constrained as possible, but that is an industry that tends to kind of set its own pace, and we just have to follow it the best we can.

We did experience two IRS mileage rate increases. The first was a 3.6 percent increase, and then, in a bit of an unusual move, in you know, a reaction to the gas price increases that we all

experienced, the IRS pumped out another 4.8 percent increase, and that is a relatively large expense for us. We do support a lot of people driving to these various meetings, and so we'll keep an eye on that and see if they push another increase through at the end of this year. We'll just see where that goes.

The main budget that was presented to you all, you know, that does cover our main administrative operations and the majority of the funding that the council receives. We do receive some separate grant activity. We're going to touch on the IRA activity later on, but we also receive some other separate grants for special programs, like citizen science, and there was some work done for snapper grouper, and a couple other various items that also are accounted for, but are not lumped into those numbers, and so what we are presenting is the primary budget for the administrative functions of the council as a whole.

The 2026 per diems were relatively flat. That's also another kind of a key expense category for us. That covers people's travel and meeting expenses whenever they attend things on behalf of the council. We did see a large spike in flight costs. The average flights were up about 23 percent in 2025, and continue to trend higher, and so that's also another number that we watch carefully, due to those being some of those variable costs that we have a little bit harder time nailing down each year, depending upon how meetings play out, and, of course, how the market is driving those costs. As we've all seen, direct flight costs increased across-the -board for pretty much everywhere that we're seeing people traveling to and from. Fortunately, the car rental costs, which is kind of the last main category in our expense from a travel standpoint, were relatively flat, and so that's just a quick summary on a few items that impacted 2026.

On 2027, I mentioned we are proposing a $4.5 million budget. A couple of key updates. We're not expecting any federal pay raise in 2027, at least based on the information that's out there currently. That was -- At least that's been, you know, what's been in the media, and what I've seen, and so that's what we went with, and, you know, we would adjust that if there's a change to that policy.

Also, they did publish 2027 per diems already. They are also flat from last year, and so that will help from a cost standpoint, and hotel rates were also relatively flat, at least for the government rate that that we are, you know, supporting in the vast majority of our bookings.

We are going to be losing one of the supplemental awards, and I mentioned some of the separate grant activity that we do. We have received a grant, for many years in the past, related to the coral program. It was about roughly $125,000. Our expectation is that that will not be awarded to the council, as it has been in years past, and there are some changes in that program.

Fortunately, we were able to do a couple of other items to help mitigate some of those costs. We were able to consolidate our office space, effective in September of this year, and that should track out to about a $70,000 annual savings in office space that we would have incurred had we not made that move, and we also were able to consolidate some duties.

We did not replace the Public Information Officer position. Those duties were absorbed among other staff, and that's netting out to about a $60,000 savings, and so, when you put those two components together, we were able to mitigate that anticipated loss in that coral funding, and, you know, hopefully stabilize things from that standpoint.

The next bullet item just -- I always just like to highlight this Federal Register notice. This is for core council activities, and I just think it kind of gives you a real high-level idea of like how many meetings you know the council is actually conducting, and it certainly doesn't reflect all the work that goes on, but these are the formal meetings that we have to give notice on an annual basis, and you can see how it just kind of fluctuates depending upon the council cycle and kind of where things are at in that process.

A couple of other key items of 2027, the South Atlantic will be hosting the annual in-person Council Coordinating Committee meeting in May of 2027, and it's, you know, traditionally each council that hosts, and it rotates throughout all of the councils on an annual basis, and so we'll be absorbing the hotel meeting room costs, and those types of costs, but, you know, the majority of the travel is covered by the attendees who send the representatives to it, and so it's not as if it's taking on an entire another council meeting, but, you know, it is still a relatively substantial cost in 2027 that we don't typically see.

We always have put this budget together you know, with the best available information that we have at the time, and, you know, we're expecting relatively flat, you know, funding to come through to the council, and hopefully, you know, some amount of increase, but we've not gotten any kind of indication of anything dramatic one way or the other, and so we are using that as our baseline, as we put the numbers together for 2027, basically flat to potentially a small increase in funding.

If something would change, and we would get word that there's going to be, you know, some sort of substantial decrease, of course, we would bring things back to the council as needed to make any adjustments based on information that we might receive.

We're always subject to an annual audit process, and we'll continue that. I am happy to report that, for the 2025 audit, you know, Suzanna here shepherds us through that process, and we were able to receive another clean audit opinion from our auditors, and so I am happy to pass that on to the council for your review. We've added a slide in here talking a little bit about the IRA projects and the various items that are out there, and I know, John that we had also submitted a separate presentation.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I think we'll -- We want to go into that when we talk about the activity schedule, because that's what it gets into, and that will probably be a big part of that discussion, because of the importance of implementation and how that's going to affect us next year.

MR. KLASNICK: All right, and so we won't spend much time here, and this is just kind of a listing of what we had submitted, what we ended up receiving funding for, and so those first two items you see on the slide, and then just a listing of those projects as they are -- As they're being worked on as we speak. That kind of hits the high-level items that I wanted to go over for you all, and I wanted to go ahead and pause now for the committee, to see if you had any questions on anything that I had covered. All right. Madam Chair, I'm not seeing any hands at the moment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks Kelly. Do we go to the activity schedule next?

MR. KLASNICK: Yes, ma'am. If you're ready, I'll bring that up.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. KLASNICK: All right. Let's do it. On the screen now is what we refer to as the council activity schedule, and, basically, this is a tool that we utilize to try to come up with our travel costs for the upcoming year, and so we take the list of the meetings that we know we're going to have, and also, you know, some meetings that we anticipate having, that, you know, may or may not happen in Fiscal 2027, and we assign costs to those based on the per diems that have been released, and historical travel trends, and those types of things, and we use this to then build-out those travel categories on that budget table. That then rolls up to that you know $4.5 million figure that I had talked about earlier.

I don't typically, you know, go through this in a ton of detail. Most of the information is fairly familiar, and we tend to repeat a lot of the meetings year over year, and so I'll just kind of pause here and see if the committee has any questions about any items, or, John, if have you anything you wanted to highlight in particular.

MR. CARMICHAEL: One of the main things to highlight in particular is our hosting of the CCC, which is added in there, and then the other thing is on like international meetings. There's a rotation of the various meetings that we go to, such as ICCAT. We send someone this year, and it will rotate I think to the Mid-Atlantic to send someone to the international meeting.

Next year, we do send people to the advisory panel meetings prior to that, but, for the most part, yes, it just follows the events that you guys are pretty familiar with, council meetings, APs, SSCs, hearings that we plan during the year, so that we make sure all that stuff is budgeted, and then this just really guides our workflow throughout the year, as well as the things that are in our grants reports.

MR. KLASNICK: All right, and so, pausing there, does anybody have -- Anybody on the committee have any specific questions or comments on the activity schedule? All right. Madam Chair I'm not seeing any hands on that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks, Kelly. I love this table. It's super helpful.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you, Jessica.

MR. KLASNICK: All right. If you're okay, Madam Chair, then I think the next item on the agenda was the workplan.

MR. CARMICHAEL: The workplan, yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sounds good.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Or, as we lovingly refer to it, the spreadsheet of doom, which you guys are all familiar with now, and looking at it at each council meeting really helps us keep this thing up-to-date and moving ahead. It goes and adds time to the right as we make progress and elevate amendments up the columns, essentially, to the active section, and I'm not sure if anybody has

anything in particular here, and so recall, you know, we look at it, and then we will also be looking at it again in the December meeting.

MR. KLASNICK: All right. Madam Chair, I'm not seeing any hands. If anybody has any comments on the committee --

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't see any hands.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Okay. So I think now we want to do the IRA resilient fisheries implementation presentation, and so we'll unmute Lara. She will walk us through this, and you can just next slide us, Lara, and we'll keep it moving along. Some of this is building off of what you saw in December, but it's going to summarize and focus in on the things that we need to do for implementation.

MR. KLASNICK: All right. Lara, let me get you here.

MS. KLIBANSKY: Okay. Can you hear me?

MR. CARMICHAEL: We do.

MR. KLASNICK: Yes, we've got you.

MS. KLIBANSKY: Great. Thank you. So, for anyone listening who doesn't know me, my name is Lara Klibansky, and I work with the council in managing the resilient fisheries initiative projects, and I'm going to give a brief update on the resilient fisheries initiative, and how we're basically moving from project delivery into implementation planning.

MR. KLASNICK: Sorry, Lara, and let me try it again here.

MS. KLIBANSKY: That's okay.

MR. KLASNICK: There we go.

MS. KLIBANSKY: All right, and so I'm going to focus on kind of overall progress, give you the implementation framework that we're building, and then there are two areas where we're looking for Executive Committee feedback before the December council meeting, and so, just as a quick reminder, and so if you'll go back one slide, please.

As a quick reminder, the resilient fisheries webpage is the central place for all this work, and so it includes project summaries, the quarterly updates, and workshop information, and I'm not going to be covering the projects in detail today, but I am going to point you to this website, if you're looking for those details.

All right, and so the figure on the left are the timelines for all seven of the resilient fisheries projects, and for the three workshops that are included in the initiative. All of the projects are underway, and, as these projects begin to be completed, we are going to need to fold the various outcomes into the implementation plan in real time.

There are four kind of key points that I want you to keep in mind as we look ahead. First, there are no extensions expected for the IRA funding, and so all work must be completed by December 2027. This includes my work as the project manager, so that everything is ready to be transitioned to council staff at that time as well.

Second, the projects are expected to produce roughly forty-four deliverables, including at least twelve reports, and so those deliverables need to be translated into kind of practical -- A practical set of actions that the council can take, and then, third, implementation planning is part of the original South Atlantic IRA proposal, and so it is a core kind of commitment that was made in these proposals. It's not something that we can really wait to start after all of the projects are completed.

This timeline shows the remaining project and workshop milestones from this fall 2026 through the December 2027 deadline, and so the bold items are anticipated project completion points, and, as each of these projects finishes, its implementable outcomes will be added to the plan again, rather than holding on to them until the end.

The major 2027 completion points include the Project 1A, which is our program management review final report and presentation in March. The final report and presentation for Project 2, which is the wreckfish AIM, and for Project 3, which is our spatial distribution modeling and EFH updates, which will be in June, and then, for Project 4, that work is going to be continuing through fall 2027, and the final project for presentations, and there are three of those, will occur in December. The important takeaway is that implementation planning is going to run alongside this schedule, to make sure that we're ready for that December 2027 handoff, and, as you can see, it also demonstrates, next year, we're expecting a busy year.

Here I'm going to walk you through the implementation planning. On the left, you can see listed are the resilient fisheries projects in the workshops. Again, the individual lines here are kind of representing the overall flow of project outcomes, and so I'm working to kind of focus these outcomes from across the initiative into one portfolio and then using a repeatable framework to organize them around specific goals.

For each goal, the plan will connect project outcomes with existing council work and sequence the tasks that are needed to move from project outcomes to that action. The plan is going to continue to be developed as the projects are finishing, and it will also track progress and provide necessary planning information, such as estimated timelines and resource needs.

This is how we're proposing we turn what is going to be a very large group of deliverables into a manageable and coordinated workplan, and so now I'm going to quickly walk through the portfolio and the implementation in a bit more detail.

The portfolio is basically the working inventory behind the implementation plan, and so, for each implementable outcome, it captures what the outcome is, the tasks that are needed to carry it out, if it's say a recommendation, when council input is needed, what the likely resource needs are, an estimate of the timeframe for implementation, and then how it connects to other ongoing work or other project outcomes.

I've identified roughly like twenty implementable outcomes so far, and that list is going to continue to grow as the rest of the projects are completed, and so organizing the work by this kind of overarching goals is going to help us identify where outcomes will reinforce one another, and it avoids treating kind of each project as a separate lane, which would be very inefficient, given how extensive the overlap is between the projects themselves and ongoing council work, and so the end product should be easy for staff and council members to reference in this portfolio, so that it's useful and more effective for that long-term work planning once the IRA funding period ends.

This is just a very basic version of what the portfolio is going to look like. As I mentioned on the previous slide, the final portfolio will include more information than is shown here, but that version, which is actually already quite extensive, doesn't fit on a slide, and so this is just the example I'm providing, and it's big on purpose, because the portfolio will basically be the kind of crucial part of the handoff to staff and to support those council implementation activities beyond 2027. It's going to kind of interpret all of the information that's found in the twelve reports, and the other deliverables, into a useful kind of referenceable document.

I'm going to move into the implementation plan here. This establishes a goal-driven framework for implementing the outcomes in that portfolio, and so each goal will bring together relevant resilient fishery outcomes, and the existing council work, and then lay out kind of a sequence of tasks that are needed to achieve that goal.

The goals come from the original IRA proposal, but are also being aligned in my work with the staff to align with the current South Atlantic priorities, the research and monitoring plan, and the east coast scenario planning potential action menu, thinking about the governance workshop, you know, coming early next year. Draft Goal 1 is serving as the demonstration of this framework, and it gives us a practical way to kind of begin the first implementation action to the council, or to bring it to the council.

Draft Goal 1 is to establish ecosystem-informed approaches to fishery management in the South Atlantic, and the first potential task is to establish an ecosystem technical committee, with council action anticipated in December, and so this task aligns with the recommendation from the ecosystem information review project, the guidance from the ecosystem data workshop, the goal posts from the snapper grouper innovation plan, and that was from the Snapper Grouper Committee, and the request from the council during the September meeting.

The committee would advise the council on developing a structured ecosystem-based decision process, drawing from the approaches such as the Mid-Atlantic integrated ecosystem assessment-based framework, but also from the Gulf Council's FEP loop-based framework, and it would help align kind of those regional data products, like the South Atlantic ecosystem status report, with the council's management objectives.

The implementation plan is intended to be a living kind of management tool, and not a static report, and it will be updated as the projects are completed, and it will track both kind of continued development of the project, or of the plan, and also project progress on individual tasks, and so that progress tracking should make it easier to communicate what is moving, what we're waiting on a council decision for, and where coordination is needed.

Each task will include an estimated timeline and resource requirements, so the council can weigh this work alongside your existing priorities, which I think we may speak about in a minute, and, again, thinking ahead to the handoff to staff, this planning detail will be essential for a smooth transition.

In December, I'll be presenting the draft implementation plan along with two proposed council actions. The first is to form a resilient fisheries steering committee, and the role of this group would be to guide the goal development, the priority setting, work planning and resource use, while also helping to ensure that smooth transition between contractor-funded support to the council staff.

The second is to establish an ecosystem technical committee, and that is the first action under Goal 1, and so the proposed membership would include two council members, four to five staff, including representation from the Southeast and the Northeast Fisheries Science Centers and from SERO and five to nine other regional experts or stakeholders. We've proposed that the members be appointed jointly by the executive director and the council chair. This format has been adapted from the format of the Gulf Council's Ecosystem Technical committee, and so we have taken that and adapted it for our needs here.

Today, I would like the Executive Committee's feedback on these two questions, and so, first, do you support forming a steering committee to guide continued development of the implementation plan, and, if so, are there specific recommendations that you would make for its role and scope? Then, second, do you support the proposed approach for establishing the ecosystem technical committee, including its general composition and appointment process? The goal for today is to get direction, so that I can work with staff to prepare really a clear kind of well-framed action item for the December council meeting, and, with that, I'll take any questions.

MR. CARMICHAEL: All right. Thank you, Lara. I appreciate that, and I just wanted to add one thing, you know, to think about this, and I like the portfolio in particular. You know, we're obligated to do grant reports for this money and other stuff, and there's a lot of pieces coming in.

In much the way that the active amendments document lets us look back and say, okay, what did we do in the last six months when we do our admin grant reports, this is going to be an incredibly useful tool for staff for saying, all right, what is what has come in on these IRA projects, and where are we, so that we can do those grant reports, and, as Lara said, have a document that, when this is done, we have all the information in one place, and we can refer back to it as the implementation proceeds, because a lot will be done in 2027, but some will roll over. Then, Jessica, your hand is up, and so back to you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks for the presentation. I feel like I have a ton of questions, and so, this steering committee, I guess my question is is that just going to be another council management committee? Is it a committee made up of council members and staff and fishermen? Like I need some more information for who might be on the committee, you know, before seeing the role and scope or knowing whether or not this is a good idea. I think it's a good idea, but I guess I just wanted to hear a little bit more, you know, because you have listed ecosystem technical committee, and who might be on that, but not for this one.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I'll start that off, and then, Lara, you jump in if there are any details I forget, but this would be very much a process committee, and it would help us bridge the gap between the things that are coming in through all these projects rather quickly during the year and the reports that would go out to the council at each council meeting.

Like Lara mentioned, the goals, and we see one of the things the steering committee is helping us come up with is, okay, like what are -- As the goals emerge, and develop, what are the draft goals that would say go to a council meeting in the report and say here's what we think is a goal to add to this process, based on, you know, whatever projects were completed in the last quarter sort of thing, and it would help us really prepare information that would go through to the council meeting and how does stuff fit in within the council meeting.

It's really a process organization, and so I see it as being really composed of a couple of council members, and maybe the ExCom, you know, can fill it, or maybe some others that have time to dive deeper into the managing IRA deliverables process, and then just supported by staff, and so like probably me and Chip and Lara. Did I cover it, Lara?

MS. KLIBANSKY: Yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and that was super helpful. I think I would be supportive of that, and, explaining it as a process committee, that was helpful for me, and so certainly if other folks on the ExCom want to weigh-in here, but, yes, it sounds great to me, and then, if you guys can suggest who should be on it, you know, when you bring this back to the December meeting, that would be great. I would certainly love to be on there, but should it be the whole ExCom, or is it just a couple of council members?

Then, the ecosystem technical committee, I guess wanting to understand. This is just taking one of the goals that's kind of gone through the process and saying, hey, this one is kind of low-hanging fruit at the top of the list to establish this ecosystem technical committee, and is that what this one is? Can you talk a little bit more about the second one, too?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I would say yes, and, Lara, go ahead.

MS. KLIBANSKY: Yes, and I was going to -- This is something that was actually largely from the ecosystem data workshop. The information, and I don't know if anyone's had a chance to read the full reports from Sarah Gaichas, but she completed the ecosystem information review in September, and her reports are fantastic.

They provide a number of opportunities for the South Atlantic to incorporate information into decision-making processes. It is a lot of very highly-technical information, and so, as I was speaking with council staff, and then especially during the September council meeting, it just became very clear that it would be helpful to have a technical committee to help guide the council to develop this kind of strategic process that Sarah, in her report, has kind of highlighted as a kind of overarching first recommendation that she had.

Part of that is because of the overlap with a lot of the other activities that are going on at the council, for example the interest in the integrated ecosystem assessment, and this directly speaks to that, and so wanting to have a technical group, including NOAA staff, including the Northeast

NOAA staff, because of their experience with developing the state of the ecosystem reports, things like that, to have them work with the council to develop kind of real meaningful action that the council can take to incorporate this ecosystem information.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Chip had his hand up, and so Chip may have something to add. Then we'll go to Amy.

DR. COLLIER: Thank you. The other thing with this ecosystem technical committee is it's going to live on beyond the IRA projects, because these pieces of ecosystem information that are coming in can be highly technical, but it's also potentially going to support any FEP development, or anything along those lines, and we see this group as being needed well beyond this project.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Amy.

MS. DUKES: You guys got me okay?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes.

MS. DUKES: Oh, my God. Amazing. Okay. First and foremost, thank you very much for this presentation. The portfolio was really easy for me to actually now start to really wrap my head around this, and so I appreciated that, and all the work that's gone into this thus far. Thank you, John, for explaining the steering committee. I agree that having that implemented is a good next move.

I think I was curious, as far as the ecosystem technical committee goes, and you had specifically said some NMFS staff, some regional experts, and have we sort of tested the waters a little bit to gauge interest, thinking about, if the council does request this, are we going to have that engagement from NMFS? I'm assuming yes, but I'm going to ask the silly question, just to make sure that we already have sort of some folks in mind and have tested the waters to determine their availability and desire to participate in this technical committee.

MR. CARMICHAEL: That's probably Lara or Chip. How much progress have we made there? I know we have some people in mind.

MS. KLIBANSKY: Yes, and so, through our coordination efforts that are already ongoing, there is some interest, and we have not reached out to specific people. The intention of having the membership appointed by the executive director and council chair is so that we can reach out over the next year, or not the next year, but over the next couple of months, and ask for specific people, work with the NOAA offices and things like that.

MR. KLASNICK: Jessica, it looks like you're the next one up.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, and so this seems like it wouldn't just be an ecosystem technical committee for the South Atlantic. It's broader than that, based on all these other folks that would be on there. The reason I bring that up is because a number of council members, you know, went to a kind of climate and ecosystem workshop a couple of years ago, and so we got to see where the other councils were, and I felt like South Atlantic was a little bit behind everybody else.

As we include folks along the Atlantic coast of the U.S., I just don't want the South Atlantic component to get swamped by all the good work that everybody else is doing. I'm hoping that, instead, it would be bringing us along, and kind of moving us forward in this area, and so am I right in assuming that this is more than just about the South Atlantic?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Well, it would be our committee, but we are hoping that, bringing in people who are farther along, we can learn from them, and that they can really help our efforts, and so that is sort of what we were thinking, you know, and certainly reflecting on that earlier experience, when we thought about people and trying to get them along, you know, really trying to build a process, so that, when we go to bat for say ecosystem status reports, getting them regularly, we also have a process on our end to say we would actually be using them.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That was super helpful. Thank you so much.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So it sounds like you guys are onboard with the general framework, and then we'll have more on this with the whole council in December?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and it sounds good.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Good, and, Lara, are you comfortable with what you have here at this point?

MS. KLIBANSKY: I am, and I look forward to discussing it with the Full Council in December.

MR. CARMICHAEL: All right. Thank you, Lara, and I appreciate that. Yes, and I know it's a little -- A little detail, more than we get in, but this is just -- Being such a special process we've been in, and a very complicated process, with forty-four-some deliverables coming in, and we wanted to make sure we were able to roll all this into our workplan, and be in good shape when the end of 2027 comes around, and it rolls over to us as staff fully.

The last thing to go into is the public hearing process. There was some discussion, after our last round of in-person public hearings, about the process and how we, as staff, are working out with the council members and planning and communicating, et cetera.

You know, really just dusting off some of the things we do, and a good reminder, because we don't hold as many public hearings as we used to in years past, and so we really wanted to get this to you guys, the Executive Committee, see if we've covered the various things you had in mind to make sure that we do, to make sure that we do for you, to make sure that we tell you, and it's draft now, and so we're looking for your input. I know we're kind of late on time here today, and we're certainly glad to take input here, and also glad to take input, you know, offline from you guys individually, if you haven't had, you know, a full opportunity to digest it, and you have some things, but I think certainly some upper-level guidance here would be very much appreciated. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just some quick feedback. I thought it was really good. I'm excited that we have something like this moving forward. I just wanted to make sure, and so there -- On page 2, council members secure law enforcement presence at the hearing, if necessary, and I just want to make it clear, in this in-person hearing section, the people who are going to be attending the

workshop, so the folks running the meeting actually know where it is, but then, also, can someone let the council members know if they're supposed to secure law enforcement and those types of things, and just trying to be a little bit more specific on when, how, who on getting law enforcement there.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and that's a good point, Jessica. Yes, I think we can add something in there to remind --To make sure that staff is part of the early planning and reaches out to the state representatives in the state where the hearings are being held to handle this part, and so it will probably be one of the next things we do, as soon as we have venues secured, and know when and where they are, to make sure, when we're providing that information out to those who are going to be attending, and be hearing officers, we let the state folks know about the law enforcement needs, because there could be cases where the state representatives aren't the hearing officers.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Right. Yes, and just as early as we can would be great, but, yes, as the state rep, sometimes I'm unsure if I'm supposed to be getting law enforcement to the hearings myself, or if council staff are doing it, and just I would love to have a little couple more bullets, or sub-bullets about that.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Sure. Thanks. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, John, and, to kind of continue on the Jessica front, yes, and I agree. A heads-up would be helpful. Is this a -- Is this if needed, or is this at every single one, do you think, or do you envision this?

MR. CARMICHAEL: This is an if-needed. I think we would rely heavily on you guys to decide if you think it's needed.

MS. DUKES: Yes, and, I mean, I see you say :if necessary", but I was thinking, you know, just more of a how we would approach this, and so I think a couple of additional bullets, to really dive into that a little bit with the exact communication exchange, would be helpful.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Any other things where you were hoping maybe for some more detail, or some clarification, and we would be sure to -- We're glad to take it. As I said, it's kind of work in progress, and we hope we're covering all the things we need.

It's amazing, when you get it down on paper, how much really is going on, and I guess a big part is because Kelly read the communication plan, and this is something that our staff is talking about a lot, you know, really what is the best way to reach people, and it's an ongoing conversation in general with all of our communication products, whether it's about hearings, or about meetings, or just about common opportunities.

Just, you know, we are constantly looking into this, what's effective, and trying to evolve, as communication preferences and approaches just seem to be in enormous flux these days. Things are just not like they used to be. If there's no other feedback on this, the last thing we would be looking for in this meeting would be a motion to approve the proposed budget, which is summarized here.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Amy, or Carolyn, would you like to make that motion?

MS. DUKES: Yes, Madam Chair. **I will make the motion that disappeared to approve the draft 2027 operational budget as presented and modified.**

DR . BELCHER: I'll second it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any additional discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.** All right. I'm just going to ask if there's other business to come before the ExCom open session here. Not seeing any hands, all right, and so I'm just going to ask if there's other business to come before the ExCom open session here.

MR. KLASNICK: I am not seeing any hands, Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. With that, then we will adjourn this meeting. Thank you, John. Thank you, Kelly, for all of this work on all of these items, and thank you for the presentations. We just really appreciate it.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you everybody. We had a bit of a slow, rocky start, but we did it. I appreciate the patience as we dealt with technology, and good to hear Amy on the webinar, and so well done, everybody. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on October 26, 2026.)

- - -

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
October 30, 2026

ExCom 2026 Fall
Attendee Report: Open Session

Report Generated:

10/26/2026 03:38 PM EDT

Webinar ID	Actual Start Date/Time	Duration	# Registered
770-748-027	10/26/2026 02:16 PM EDT	53 minutes	27

Staff Details

Attended	Interest Rating	Last Name	First Name
Yes	Not applicable for staff	Klasnick	01Kelly
No	Not applicable for staff	Carmichael	John

Attendee Details

Attended	Interest Rating	Last Name	First Name
Yes	100	Brouwer	Myra
Yes	94	Carmichael	John
Yes	46	Curtis	Judd
Yes	41	Curtis	Christina
Yes	59	DeVictor	Rick
Yes	52	Dukes	Amy
Yes	100	Foss	Kristin
Yes	87	Hadley	John
Yes	94	Hager	Beth
Yes	100	Howington	Kathleen
Yes	48	Iberle	Allie
Yes	57	Kersting	Anne
Yes	99	Klibansky	Lara
Yes	88	McCawley	Jessica
Yes	100	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	100	Schmidtke	Michael
Yes	39	Walsh	Mick
Yes	92	belcher	carolyn
Yes	58	collier	chip
Yes	65	thomas	suz
No	0	Baker	Randy
No	0	Islam	Aklima
No	0	Klasnick	01Kelly
No	0	McMains	Andrew
No	0	Sommerfeld	Andrew

No	0	Spanik	Kevin
No	0	Whitehurst	Harold