

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE/ FINANCE COMMITTEE

**Charleston Marriott Hotel
Charleston, SC**

September 13, 2011

SUMMARY MINUTES

Executive/Finance Committee

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Duane Harris

Dr. Michelle Duval
Mac Currin
Bill Teehan

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Dr. Roy Crabtree
Tom Swatzel
Dr. Wilson Laney

LT Robert Foos
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Doug Haymans
Charlie Phillips

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Dr. Kari MacLauchlin
Kim Iverson
Julie O'Dell

Gregg Waugh
Dr. Brian Chevront
Roger Pugliese
Anna Martin
Myra Brouwer
Andrea Grabman

Observers/Participants:

Monica Smit-Brunello
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith
Kate Michie
Dr. Mike Travis

Dr. Jack McGovern
Rick DeVictor
Bob Gill

Other Participants Attached

The Executive/Finance Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Topaz Room of the Charleston Marriott Hotel, Charleston, South Carolina, September 13, 2011, and was called to order at 11:30 o'clock a.m. by Chairman David Cupka.

MR. CUPKA: Our first order of business is approval of the agenda. Are there any additions or anything to the agenda? Seeing none, then our agenda is approved. Our next order of business is approval of the committee minutes from our June 2011 meeting. Are there any corrections, additions or deletions from our minutes? Seeing none, then those minutes are approved. That brings down to the status report on the current Calendar Year Council Expenditures and Activities, which is in an attachment, and I'm going to ask Bob to go over those for us.

MR. MAHOOD: If you look behind Attachment 1, which shows the budget status. As you recall, we're on five-year grants now. This is actually the second year of our five-year grant period. I can report we're in pretty good shape right now. The first year, which was the 2010 year, we were very frugal not knowing when we were going to get or what we were going to get in our CY 2011 budget. We have now got that budget.

It came in at level funding, which was really better than we had hoped for under the circumstances of what we were hearing. Based on that and some programs that Mike has implemented that has resulted in some pretty good cost savings, we've been trying to maintain a surplus knowing full well that probably in 2012 or 2013, some time in that area there is going to be some significant cuts to our budget.

We hope it doesn't happen but I think we all understand that there are going to be some cuts. I talked to Congressman Boehner, and he assured me that they don't have an idea of what we're going to have in 2012, but they're working on it right now so we'll see what happens there. If anybody has any questions, Mr. Chairman, I will be glad to answer it. Right now we're looking at plus \$436,000 so far this year based on our present activities and what we anticipate to happen the rest of the year.

MR. CUPKA: Are there any questions for Bob on our current year budget and expenditures? Again, I know Bob and the staff made a real attempt to be frugal and try and save wherever we can because as he indicated we're all convinced that it's going to be some tough times coming, so we're trying to save as much as we can.

MR. MAHOOD: One big saving in an area that has helped us a lot, as you all know we're booking on our central billing card and we're saving the taxes. You'd be surprised how much that adds up for the number of meetings that we sponsor and people to. It has been a significant amount of savings. I thank Mike for setting that up and recognizing that.

Also, we budget at a hundred percent attendance and obviously you don't get a hundred percent attendance to your meeting, and that builds in a little surplus as you move forward. We're hoping that it doesn't get too made, but I think we at least can make it through 2012 even with some cuts and hopefully through the whole five-year grant period.

MR. JOLLEY: Bob, do you get to roll over your entire left-over credit or do you have to roll some of it back to the fed?

MR. MAHOOD: John, we used to have to do that. We had annual budgets but several years ago we went to five-year grant periods. Actually I think it started back in 2006. We're in the second year of our five-grant period now. It all runs together and we don't even have to do any paperwork to run it over.

When you see that surplus, it's not something we're going to lose at the end of the year. It's something we'll be able to roll into next year. Therefore, if our budget is reduced next year, we have something to fall back on to continue our current level of activities. Now obviously down a couple of years if budgets take a big hit, then at some point we'll probably have to reduce the activities to meet the lowered budgets.

We're kind of hedging against what we think might happen in the future by trying to be frugal right now. We know how much has been approved for the five-year period, and, of course, it's all dependent on how much we get annually when congress passes a budget. We'll talk a little bit about 2012, which we really know nothing about at this point.

MR. CUPKA: Other questions or comments for Bob? Robert.

MR. BOYLES: Bob, you mentioned you don't know much about 2012, but I know the House has taken some action. Have you gotten any indication from the service what the line looks like for 2012?

MR. MAHOOD: Well, the initial action that the House took back – you're talking about a couple or three months ago – yes, that was horrible. It had some major reductions within the NOAA Fisheries and totally within NOAA. I think some of the programs got hit extremely hard; 40 percent cuts and that type of thing.

Fortunately, even in that budget, though, funding for the councils remained level. For such items as data collection and stock assessments I think even increased a little bit in some of those budgets, but other areas like marine mammals and protected resources took major hits in that budget. I'm hoping that's not the budget that ultimately will occur, but we're not sure yet.

MR. CUPKA: Other questions for Bob? Seeing none, then we'll move on to our next agenda item which is development of Calendar Year 2012 activities schedule and budget, and Bob has already alluded to the budget.

MR. MAHOOD: Obviously, it's hard to develop your level of activities until you have a budget, so we're hoping that some time between now and the December meeting we'll at least know if we're on a continuing resolution and at what level that continuing resolution will be, and we will be coming to the Executive/Finance Committee with an activities level for next year. That's our intent, anyway.

MR. CUPKA: I've had some discussions with some congressional staff, and the last word I got was it looked like we were going to be looking at another CR at least for a while. Other questions or comments? Okay, that brings us down to other business. There is one item I wanted to mention, and that is at least one of the other councils has raised the issue about whether the councils should look at the formula where we allocation funding to the various councils.

That comes up at our CCC meeting which will probably be this winter if we have one. The thought I think is that some councils, and I guess it has been primarily us and the Gulf Council have either given away some species to the states to manage or consider in doing some of that. The thought process is that were to happen, that the states who are in a similar budget situation with problems would be coming to the council and maybe asking for some funds from the council.

Like I say, at least one council has raised the issue of whether we need to address the formula by which funds are distributed to the eight councils. I'm sure that will be on the agenda for our next CCC meeting. I've had some discussions with Chairman Gill from the Gulf Council, and, of course, we're very opposed to this and don't see the need to do that.

We aren't giving up plans or anything. We have made some minor changes relative to things like octocoral, but I don't see us having a decreased need for any funding over what we have now. We'll let you know what happens on that. I'll ask Bob if he wants to make any comments on that or not.

MR. GILL: Yes, I would in that it will be a discussion at our next CCC meeting. I suspect that discussion will be fairly intense and probably the harbinger of further discussions, but we are strongly opposed to that action. We don't think the basis makes any sense at all, so we'll have to see how the future bears all that out.

MR. MAHOOD: And this is something that comes up every once a while. I think the Gulf Council and the South Atlantic Council and the Caribbean, all three are very good at managing their money. What we get we live on and we adjust to it. We have some of the councils in this operation that don't seem to know what a budget is, so consequently they always think they need more money.

Every once in a while you'll get one of the EDs that says, well, we need to look at readjusting the formula. The formula has been in place now for many, many years and I don't think it's going to be – it's going to be readjusted over my dead body, I can tell you that. Back when it initially was set up, we traded percentages to try to even it out to make it fair for everybody.

We're actually the second lowest percentage of the councils relative to the funding we get and we live within our budgets, and it's very manageable. Every once in a while it happens. I don't think anything is going to come of it, Bob. Most of the EDs that are still there are very much in favor of it. The trouble with it, when you adjust the percentages you've winners and losers. Somebody gives up money.

But it is interesting that of the eight councils that decided some 10 or 12 years ago to set up this system, Kitty Simons out in the Western Pacific is the only one that has never agreed to it. It's interesting; there is a long history. Believe me, before we had this setup where everybody knew exactly what percentage of any money they get and exactly what percentage of any reductions they would take, it was a bloodbath when we got together to fight over the money. This has made life so much easier that I don't think it's going to change.

MR. CUPKA: Other comments or questions? Seeing none, then we're going to adjourn the Executive/Finance Committee.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 11:42 o'clock a.m., September 13, 2011.)

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

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PLEASE SIGN IN

So that we will have a record of your attendance at each meeting and so that your name may be included in the minutes, we ask that you sign this sheet for the meeting shown below.

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 September 14, 2011
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