

Administrative / Budget Committee Report
August 24, 2026
General Joe Spraggins – Chair

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab G, No. 1**) and the minutes (**Tab G, No. 2**) of the January 2026 meeting were approved as written.

Review of Final 2026 Funded Budget and Activities (Tab G, No. 4)

Staff presented the proposed final funded 2026 budget in Tab G, No. 4. The total funding received is \$4,634,838, that includes \$323,650 in one-time funding. Staff reviewed year-to-date expenditures and proposed budget revisions to reflect planned activities throughout the remainder of the year, including costs associated with relocating the Council office. Adjustments were made to the draft 2026 budget reviewed in January to account for year-to-date activities and future planned activities.

A member of the Committee asked about the reduction in Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) salary budget. Staff explained that the budgetary reduction was to account for lower-than-scheduled meeting activity that has occurred to date. The reduced expenditure was largely attributable to virtual SSC meetings and shorter meeting schedules while awaiting the results of the recreational data collection system (MRIP-FES pilot results).

Members also asked about the outlook for future funding appropriations and whether delays experienced in recent years were likely to continue. Staff indicated that funding timing is expected to remain uncertain and emphasized the importance of carefully managing expenditures and preserving available reserves to address potential delays in future funding releases.

The Committee recommends, and I so move: **that the Council approve the final 2026 budget.**

Motion carried with no opposition.

Discussion of future Funding Cycle, Timing, and Planning (Tab G, No. 5)

Staff provided a short presentation of recent trends in the timing of federal funding releases, the operational challenges associated with receiving annual Council funding after the beginning of the calendar year, and a few potential strategies for future Council consideration. The shift to funding after January 1, has increased the Council's reliance on carryover funds and created challenges for meeting planning, contract administration, and cash-flow management. Staff also noted that similar challenges are being experienced by all regional fishery management councils. The committee was asked to comment on the suggestions presented and offer direction or thoughts. After the discussion, the Committee expressed support for splitting the initial state liaison and commission contract advancements into two payments and observed that states would continue to assist the Council where possible. Committee members generally supported continued evaluation of the proposed cost-saving measures and requested that staff develop additional information and recommendations for future consideration.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.