

Administrative Policy & Budget/Personnel Committee Report
March 2015 -- Co-Chairs, Mr. Douglass Boyd & Lance Robinson

Review of 2014 Carryover and 2015 Budget - Tab G, No. 4

Staff reviewed the 2014 carryover budget and the proposed 2015 budget noting that we have not received any 2015 funding from NOAA to date. We have spent about \$550K on 2015 expenses to date using 2014 monies. Staff is considering the accounting of YTD 2015 expenses to the 2014 carryover funds rather than to the 2015 budget since we have no actual 2015 funding at this time. We are not sure that NOAA will approve, but the North Pacific Council is planning to do the same type of accounting.

By a unanimous voice vote, the Committee recommends and I so move that the Council, starting in 2015, increase liaison funding by \$10,000 to a total of \$45,000 to each of the Gulf States and the Gulf States Commission for the liaison contracts.

Review of Benefits Analysis by Markley Consultants – Tab G, No. 5

Staff reviewed the evaluation provided by Markley Consultants regarding the status of our 401K plan relative to IRS regulations. Staff intends to follow the recommendations that we restate our 401k plan with the IRS before April 2016 and to send a request to the IRS for a letter of determination regarding the status of our governmental 401k plan.

The consultants also compared the staff retirement benefits relative to that of the federal government and concluded that the current Council retirement plan is adequate and comparable. Staff plans to follow the recommendation to pursue avenues for potentially supplementing the retirement levels of those employees with greater tenure who are below par with the federal retirement system by making our 401k agreement to allow discretionary contributions by employee, as needed.

No Motions were made on this topic.

Review and Approval of Early Retirement Health Plan – Tab G, No. 4

Staff reviewed the policies of other Councils regarding early retirement health plans and presented data on projected costs for providing the same for Gulf Council staff.

By a unanimous voice vote, the Committee recommends and I so move, that the Council implement an early retirement plan for employees, with 20 years of tenure and at an age of 55 or older, with a 75% subsidy for health care premiums up to Medicare eligibility age for staff.

Review of AP Term Limits – Tab G, No. 5

Staff reviewed the policies of the other Councils regarding term limits and staggered terms. Only one Council had staggered terms.

By a unanimous voice vote, the Committee recommends and I so move, to recommend that the AP and SSC members serve 3 year terms without term limits. The AP will have staggered terms but the SSC will not.

Changes to the Title and Appointment Process for Select APs

Staff presented a summary of the structure of select APs that are comprised of members with specific membership dictated by specific job titles or in combination with general public appointees. Staff requested the Council consider retitling the Law Enforcement, SEDAR, Outreach and Education and the Aquaculture APs as Technical Committees and to allow appointments to be made jointly by the Executive Director and Council Chair. Staff also requested that the SMZ Monitoring Team be discontinued.

By a unanimous voice vote, the Committee recommends and I so move, to retitle the following APs as Technical Committees, with appointments to the SEDAR, Outreach and Education, and the Aquaculture Technical Committees made jointly by the Executive Director and Council Chair.

By a unanimous voice vote, the Committee recommends and I so move, to discontinue the SMZ monitoring group and reinstitute it as a working group, on an as needed basis.

Other Business

Staff recommended the Council consider allowing the payment of health insurance for employees on extended unpaid leave due to medical reasons.

By a unanimous voice vote, the Committee recommends and I so move, to amend the administrative handbook language by adding the highlighted language below:

Section 4.6 Unpaid Leave

The Executive Director may grant unpaid leave to an employee for any period as deemed appropriate. The unpaid leave status may be terminated at any time with seven days notification to the employee. Except when the unpaid leave is under the Family Medical Leave Act, **or due to a medical condition that extends beyond the family medical leave period,** the Council's current practice of wholly assuming the cost of health, life, dental, and disability insurance premiums will not continue after the first 30 day period of unpaid leave.