

**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council - May 2018**

**Council and Advisory Body Meeting Communication Protocol Topics**

**1. Pre-meeting**

**A. Publicizing –**

Press Release – Published on the Council website once the meeting is scheduled. Direct emailed via Constant Contact the day the FRN publishes. The email distribution list is 4191 people total broken into fishery specific categories, Council members, and media – Council meeting notices are sent to everyone. Advisory Panel notices are sent to Council members, media, and the fishery group aligned with the topic.

Pre-Council Blog post – A short article that highlights the important topics the Council plans to address and solicits public comment. It is published via blogger and shared on Facebook the week before each meeting.

Facebook Notification – Meetings are mentioned the day the FRN publishes and reminders are posted the day of, or the day before, with a link to the webinar.

**B. Communication with Council/Committee members**

Done via email. The Travel Coordinator sends out a Meeting Authorization and travel instructions about 3 weeks in advance of each meeting.

**C. Document distribution**

All briefing materials are shared on our website and FTP server. Closed session documents are distributed via FTP server only. Meeting members are notified via email when materials are put online. Jump drives with briefing materials are available for Council members at each meeting.

**D. Coordination with other local/federal agencies and NGOs**

Email, g-chat, phone, webinar

**2. During the Meeting**

**A. What technology/copy room/office is available and for whom?**

Electrical outlets provided to staff, Council members, and the audience. Photocopier, printer, and office supplies are available for staff and Council. Internet is provided for all attendees. All meeting materials are projected on screens around with room with all Council members and staff using microphones throughout the meeting.

**B. Broadcasting (audio/video, webinar, etc.) including voting issues and other policy issues.**

Go-To-Meeting webinar is used to broadcast the audio and materials being projected.

**C. Public interaction during meeting - How is public allowed to comment (e.g., via teleconference)? Are there specific timeframe(s) for public comment?**

Public testimony is hosted for a few hours after Committees meet and before the Full Council reviews committee reports. Written comments received via email or online portal are gathered in issue specific spreadsheets that are shared with the Council. Staff presents a summary written comments and comments heard during public hearings/ scoping workshops, and during relevant committee meetings.

**D. Distribution of materials during meeting and what is the medium (paper handouts, website uploads, etc.)?**

Materials are online and certain documents are available as handouts.

**E. How press is handled during meeting - Request for Interviews; Guidelines on cameras and microphones.**

Meeting are open to the public, including news media. The Public Information Officer arranges interviews.

**3. Post meeting**

**A. Getting meeting decisions out to the public (newsletters, website, social media, etc.)**

Press release – A press release detailing all Council decisions is published immediately after the meeting concludes. It's distributed on the website, via Constant Contact, and shared on Facebook.

Facebook – Pertinent motions are posted as they're made.

Website – Meeting materials are archived alongside the Motions Report and verbatim Meeting Minutes.

**B. Press releases – who drafts, how distributed, when?**

The Public Information Officer drafts all unique content and regulatory press releases, the Communications assistant drafts meeting and reoccurring/recurring/reminders releases which are reviewed by the PIO. Meeting notices and all regulatory releases are published the day the FRN publishes on the website, Facebook, and via Constant Contact email.

**C. Meeting materials – What is stored and where (e.g., documents, actions, minutes, audio/video); Public access; Searchable**

All Council meeting briefing materials, committee summaries, motions, and minutes are archived on the website, the FTP server, and internally on the server

**4. Areas to improve**

**A. Areas your Council is looking for solutions: information distribution, broadcasting meetings, teleconferencing?**

We've discussed the potential for using voting machines to record Council votes during meetings. We're always trying to build our communications following to ensure our message is distributed widely. We're also considering whether or not to proceed with print regulations and whether or not we want to upgrade our regulations app. We're also looking at ways to Streamline the dissemination of Council meeting materials and travel expense reports. Finally, we've been charged with creating a "best fishing practices" website and we're hoping to recommend practices that are scientifically proven and we want to avoid redundancy in efforts from other agencies.

**B. Finish this sentence: I wish our Council had the ability to** put more emphasis on the importance of quality outreach efforts to both inform and engage a variety of stakeholders.