



Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

Communications Committee Meeting - Approved

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

9:00 – 11:30 AM Alaska Time

Virtual

9:00 AM: Call to Order by Chair Cassandra Squibb.

Roll Call

Present: Chair Cassandra Squibb, Vice Chair Hannah Heimbuch, Julianne Curry, Shannon Ford Ward, Nicole Kimball, Pat Shanahan, Everette Anderson, Julie Cisco, Jessica Keplinger, Tomi Marsh (Board liaison)

Not Present: Matt Carle

Also Present: ASMI staff and contractors

ASMI Antitrust Statement

Chair Cassandra Squibb read the antitrust statement.

Approval of Agenda

- **Motion:** Heimbuch
- **Seconded:** Anderson
- **Vote:** None opposed. Motion passed.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Approval of Previous Minutes

- **November 11, 2023, All Hands Draft Minutes**
 - **Motion:** Anderson
 - **Seconded:** Ford Ward
 - **Vote:** None opposed. Motion passed.

FY25 Budget Discussion

FY25 Communications Budget

Chair Squibb opened the discussion on the goal of preparing the budget for board approval by the end of the meeting.

Greg Smith introduced the budget, noting significant reductions across ASMI programs due to the fishing industry crisis and lack of state funds. By FY27, there could be cash flow issues, necessitating an assessment of current ASMI activities and spending. The board set a reduction of \$50,000 for the Communications program and a reduction in the Consumer PR budget. Potential state funds may be available but must go through the approval process.

Smith shared the budget document, explaining reductions and changes. He mentioned that if state funds are granted, restoration of the consumer PR budget is expected. The committee aims to approve a base budget with the possibility of a future amendment if additional funds are received.

FY25 Consumer PR Budget

Smith introduced a \$284,000 reduction in the consumer PR budget and addressed reductions line by line. He highlighted that some Comms budget would cover events, such as the NY media tour, and domestic PR would now help reduce Comms PR budget cuts.

Pat Shanahan inquired about the quarter position's transition. Smith responded that the position will no longer support Comms and will instead focus on Comms Marketing and Specialist roles.

Julie Sisco asked about reductions in social media and influencer budgets. Katie Goldberg explained that this would result in slightly lower caliber influencer partners but would maintain posting, outreach, and research. A paid amplification budget would cover posting and boosting.

Squibb asked about the impact on the SSA campaign. Smith replied that digital advertising and promotion would remain the same, but TV ads would be eliminated.

Everette Anderson questioned the sample product budget. Smith explained it involves sending Alaska seafood samples to media contacts, creating recipes, display events, social media content, and influencer partnerships.

Anderson expressed concerns about social media amplification gaps and competition from Norwegian seafood. Smith noted state funds would be valuable for domestic market investments.

Anderson also asked about FAM trips and sweepstakes changes. Smith indicated an adjusted FAM trip for FY24, and potential funds set aside for FY25. Goldberg mentioned targeting key stories throughout the year and collaborating with ATIA for FAM trips.

Nicole Kimball inquired about WRAP funds. Smith said they would be distributed in May or June. In the hypothetical case of receiving new funds, Kimball asked if they could be allocated to Comms or Domestic. Smith noted that additional funds would likely restore budget cuts.

Kimball asked about UGF use and potential connections to ATIA. Smith clarified that UGF would primarily focus on the US domestic market and potentially restore and increase the PR budget.

Julianne Curry emphasized reaching out to the legislature to encourage ASMI funding and suggested amplifying the influencer program and featuring more Alaska harvesters.

Smith mentioned ComFish interviews with Alaska harvesters and positive engagement from the NY media event. Shannon supported maintaining the FAM trip budget for its value in connecting people to Alaska seafood.

Squibb questioned prioritizing FAM trips vs. the NY media event. Goldberg stated that for FY25, FAM trips would be prioritized, with the NY media event potentially becoming a smaller or one-off event. The focus would shift to creative content and retargeting digital messaging.

Smith agreed that the NY media event could be reinstated with additional funds.

Squibb asked for clarification on steps to make the budget actionable for the board. Greg Smith suggested approving the current budget and including a memo to the board requesting reinstatement of programs if additional funds are received.

Pat Shanahan emphasized clarifying needed funds and programs and sharing input with the board. Smith confirmed he would present it to the board in May and include a memo detailing the restoration and increase of the consumer PR budget and other programs.

Nicole Kimball motioned for the following:

- If State of Alaska funding for ASMI is received for FY25, a significant portion should go toward PR/domestic marketing.
- The committee supports restoration of the FY24 Communications budget (with \$25k from AWG for new visitor outreach) and the consumer PR budget.
- Targeted increases compared to FY24 should support paid amplification, influencer programs, sampling programs, and FAM trips.
- **Motion:** Kimball
- **Seconded:** Shanahan

- **Vote:** Motion passed.

A motion to pass the budget with the included memo was made and seconded.

- **Motion:** Shanahan
- **Seconded:** Heimbuch
- **Vote:** Motion passed.

Director's Report

ASMI Board of Directors Memo re: Climate Messaging

Smith introduced guidance from the board on climate messaging from the February 2024 meeting, clarifying that the board discussed but did not adopt additional funding for this area. Sustainability messaging will continue at a high level within communications and consumer PR. Smith noted an audit of current messaging and how it aligns with sustainability and fisheries management.

Jessie Keplinger asked about low carbon footprint messaging and its accuracy. Smith noted a lack of recent research but acknowledged the need for robust data moving forward.

Keplinger also inquired about "simple market feedback" from the board memo. Smith interpreted this as a broad focus on sustainability and climate messages, encouraging collaboration with partners to share sustainability stories.

Kimball asked if the board expected ASMI to highlight adaptive fisheries management or climate-friendly fishing. Smith responded that it encompasses both aspects.

Kimball felt there was a gap in supporting climate messaging and requested a directive if ASMI should explore it further. Goldberg mentioned new research on engaging climate messaging without specific research focus, which could position seafood as a climate solution.

Smith confirmed that climate messaging will be a key topic in future communication discussions.

Julianne Curry asked if the board had seen the new research. Goldberg indicated it has not been shared with the board but could be.

Comms Program Updates

NY Media Event Recap (Edelman)

Tessa Ward provided a recap of the Cook Wild campaign and NY Media event, praising Heimbuch for her role. Heimbuch acknowledged Edelman's excellent groundwork for interviews.

Shanahan asked about the social media plan and specifics on recipes used. Smith confirmed that ASMI has rights to media generated from the event. Goldberg noted that recipes and images are shared on ASMI socials and tracked for stories.

Smith mentioned that influencer content will focus on key species as directed by the industry and board.

Old Business and Good of the Order

Squibb proposed a follow-up Comms meeting in the fall, following past timelines.

Adjourn

- **Motion:** Shanahan
- **Seconded:** Ford Ward
- **Vote:** Motion passed.