



Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

Board of Directors Meeting
Friday, February 23, 2024
9:00 AM – 4:00 PM Alaska Time
Baranof Hotel, 127 N. Franklin Street, Juneau & Virtual

APPROVED MINUTES (on 5-9-24)

Call to Order

Chair Allen Kimball called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM.

Present: Chair Allen Kimball, Vice Chair Tomi Marsh, John Daly, Duncan Fields, Richard Riggs, Commissioner Julie Sande (Ex Officio), John Springsteen (Ex Officio), Senator Scott Kawasaki (Ex Officio Alternate)

Not present: Michael Erickson, Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang (Ex Officio), Senator Gary Stevens (Ex Officio), Senator Bert Stedman (Ex Officio), Senator Lyman Hoffman (Ex Officio), Representative Sarah Vance (Ex Officio), Representative Sara Hannan (Ex Officio Alternate).

Approve Agenda

Fields made a motion to approve modified agenda - under new business, move b) Climate Change Messaging to after Executive Session and add h) Marketing Opportunities in Tourism. Riggs seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Approve Minutes from November 4, 2023

Fields made a motion to approve the minutes from November 4; Marsh seconded the motion. Fields commented that it would be helpful to attach the documents, like committee reports, which are referenced in the minutes. All were in favor.

Chairman's Remarks

Chair Kimball recognized the loss of Jack Schultheis. We appreciate the contributions he made, the leadership he provided and the service he gave to Alaska seafood. It is great having this board meeting at the end of Seafood Week with so many industry members here and good activity with the legislators. The presidential executive order with the ban of Russian seafood in the US provides opportunity. He cautions that we continue to support long-term markets. We've had significant successes with USDA, so that is creating some great dynamics.

Jeremy Woodrow read the Anti-Trust Statement.

Executive Director Update

Jeremy Woodrow shared that this is Hannah Lindoff's last board meeting after 15 years with ASMI. We are going to miss her, and glad she isn't going far and will stay involved with the industry through her role at SeaShare. We are wrapping up Fish Week, which was great coordination with PSPA, UFA, etc. He thanked Senators Sullivan and Murkowski for the ban; there is work to be done. SJR14 (in appendix) is Senate joint resolution that supports the federal efforts going on. Thank you to Senator Bishop for carrying this. ASMI's Economic Impact Report, which comes out every two years, is close to completion. Note that it is 2021-2022 data. With the Russia seafood ban, Senator Sullivan would like to hear stories on how the industry is benefiting.

There was no public comment.

New Business

Board Roundtable

Chair Kimball invited each board member to share an update on market observations and conditions. Vice Chair Tomi Marsh shared a thank-filled tribute to Jack Schultheis. There were positives shared like good tanner crab season, fishermen did sign-on letters, USDA success, and the executive order to ban Russian fish. There are still challenges and struggles across the supply chain. When demand slows, quality needs to be the focus, and there needs to be more product development.

ASMI Tagline

Domestic Marketing Director Megan Rider said that ASMI has been working with Circana on exploring words like “responsible” instead of “sustainable.” The surveys include RFM’s tagline which also uses “sustainable.” Rider said the findings will be shared at a future board meeting.

Global Food Aid Update

Global Food Aid Program Director Bruce Schactler reported that there has been approximately \$160 million in purchases, feeding 30-40 million people. He shared that there are some views out there that this is a bailout for a failed industry. USDA is coming to us and asking for more canned sockeye because the consumer is requesting it. Schactler is working with companies on adding a QR code on the label per request of USDA, so consumers have info like recipes for cooking it at home. A policy change at USDA is causing some container freight issues. Progress is being made with companies on new products like canned pollock and canned herring.

Climate Change Messaging

As a response to ongoing requests from the Communications Committee, we have drafted a response for the board to review. There was discussion about how this is a large topic that is difficult to address. We should continue to highlight the positivity of Alaska’s management of our fisheries.

Federal Funding Update

Senior Director of Global Marketing & Strategy Hannah Lindoff shared that ASMI has been approved for \$4.5 million for MAP, and we should know how much has been approved for RAPP in May or June. Therefore, it is not in the budget yet because it is unknown, but it will have to be matched.

Seafood Technical Director John Burrows shared the progress of the current NOAA SK Grant study, which aims to create a nutrient-contaminant database for Alaska species, meant to differentiate Alaska-specific product from the aggregate species data on federal databases which include fish from other locations as well as to establish baselines for contaminant monitoring. The project is progressing, having acquired a significant number of individual fish for analysis. This effort has largely been through purchasing fish, as the donations expected from industry were not often available. To date, enough samples have been procured for the completion of the study, however gaps exist in the sampling plan for several. We are also under budget currently, despite the tests and numbers being well within the desired scope. As a result, ASMI is reaching out to NOAA to see if a second extension is appropriate to allow the budget to be more fully expended by fleshing out the samples where gaps exist and increasing species.

Marketing Opportunities in Tourism

Vice Chair Tomi Marsh shared cruise lines are exploring new ports like Kodiak, and it makes sense to partner with cruise lines who want to enhance the passenger experience by doing things like Alaska seafood nights on board. Riggs shared that they are a captive audience, and it is a great, growing opportunity because these are two important industries to Alaska complementing each other. Woodrow shared we are trying to decide the direction because there are challenges such as each cruise line is different in how receptive they are, but it is a long-term, growing opportunity.

Fields made a motion to go into Executive Session right after lunch for matters pertaining to ASMI personnel and/or budget. Riggs seconded it.

Lunch with invited guests.

Executive Session: ASMI Committees & CAP, ASMI FY25 Budget, ASMI Personnel

At 3:46 PM, Fields made a motion to return to Open Session and continue with New Business. Riggs seconded it.

Fields made a motion to join CLIA. Marsh seconded it.

The board requested that ASMI allocate funds of \$5,000 each, from Communications, Domestic, and International programs, for expanding marketing efforts with cruise lines.

Fields made a motion for the Executive Director to write or co-sign a letter with UFA to the SK Grant AFAC recommending a longer timeline for SK projects. Marsh seconded it.

All Hands on Deck Board Additional Funding Proposals

Rider presented on how the domestic program plans to allocate funds which were dedicated to focus on the following species per board motion at All Hands on Deck: pollock, sablefish, and pink and keta salmon. She is investigating opportunities in the sushi space as this is a fast-growing segment in both retail and foodservice and could potentially be a good fit for not only Alaska surimi but possibly other species such as salmon.

Set ASMI Board Budget Meeting Date

We will send a doodle poll to decide on May 9th or 10th in Sitka.

Good for the Order

Fields thanked Chair Kimball for coming to Juneau early and meeting with legislators.

Adjourn

Riggs made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Marsh seconded it. Meeting adjourned at 4:19 PM.