



Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

Communications Committee Meeting

Virtual Zoom

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

9:30 AM – 11:00 AM Alaska Time

Draft Minutes

I. **9:30 AM:** Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Pat Shanahan at 9:34am.

II. **Roll Call**

Members present: Pat Shanahan, Cassandra Squibb, Jes Hathaway, Julianne Curry, Nicole Kimball, Matt Carle, Hannah Heimbuch, Peggy Parker, Tomi Marsh

Members absent: Jack Schulteis

Others present: Ashley Heimbigner, Katie Goldberg, Kate Consenstein, Christine Fanning, Tessa Ward, Megan Rider, John Burrows, Monica George, Karmina Zafiro, Nicole Stangeland, Alina Fairbanks, Susan Marks, Tanna Peters, Arianna Elnes

III. ASMI Antitrust Statement

Shanahan read the ASMI Antitrust Statement.

IV. Approval of Previous Minutes

Hathaway motioned, Carle seconded the approval of the minutes from the meeting on February 26, 2021 as-is with no corrections.

V. Approval of Agenda

Shanahan asked for any adjustments to the agenda. Squibb made a motion to approve the agenda, and Hathaway seconded. There were no objections.

VI. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VII. Current FY2021 Budget Update

Heimbigner went over the FY21 budget, which included budget shifts for the rest of the year.

- The budget included a cautious budget for travel, in case it becomes a safe possibility with beneficial opportunities again.
- Conference and Events Sponsorships budget decreased because they are fewer in number and have less overhead resulting in smaller asks.
- No shifts in the Advertising and Promotions budget.
- Stock Photo Acquisition was increased in FY21 to support all of the digital and content needs that our programs and industry partners needed over the last year. We have filled some identified content holes which will be available in the media library soon. We are going to be replacing the parchment photo series this summer. Upwards of 80 products that need to be shot, which requires a significant budget.
- Very little was spent Printing and Materials in FY21, however, the program has plans to utilize the funds with printing projects for the direct marketer program, 40 year anniversary, and recipe card and swag production.
- No shifts in the Contract Labor Support budget
- Media tour expenses have included some one off product sourcing but don't anticipate significant spending by the end of the year.

Heimbigner posed that looking forward, we're looking at how to spend the leftover funds and exploring spending it on research. A distinct study is beyond our budget, but there is a lot of existing data we can access from survey work being done in the food and beverage space.

- Squibb commented that she is really excited about researching/getting to know the post-covid consumer. She is also very enthusiastic about the creation of a new parchment photo series.
- Hathaway, speaking to the research, commented that we already know quite a bit about Alaska seafood, and agreed with the approach of learning more about consumers and how we can place Alaska seafood into their trends. It also never hurts to have that information for the general seafood industry. She said that research will be used, and it is helpful to have ASMI behind it.

VIII. Review Proposed FY2022 Budget Proposal

Heimbigner went over the FY22 Communications & Consumer PR budget proposals:

- Proposed an overall \$15,000 decrease from the FY21 actual budget for FY22.
- Shared that the goal is to utilize funds in FY22 to get the word out and improve the key tools and platforms the program invested in in FY21 (website, photography/videography), as well as key photo acquisition projects.
- Budget also allows for a slight increase in travel. Cautiously optimistic that travel will open up and staff will be traveling more, so that line will increase in Q3/Q4. Also allows for travel for in-state photo shoots.
- Again cautiously optimistic about Conferences and Event Sponsorships picking up, but doesn't anticipate bouncing back to previous spend levels.
- Advertising and Promotions budget line remains the same.

- Major FY21 investments in stock photo and video resulted in proposal to decrease spending in this area in FY22.
- Printing and Materials spending reduced, with remaining funds available for further understanding and meeting needs of direct marketer project, as well as updating materials with new branding. Also includes digital tools, should we identify platforms that would help our new website, funds would be available for support.
- Funds for Domestic Consumer PR support, Contract labor support, Media tour expenses (funds set aside and earmarked for smaller/individual FAM trips)
 - Squibb asked if Printing and Materials line is shared with Domestic. Heimbigner did not know for sure, as we have separate budgets to meet our two audiences. Monica George agreed in the Zoom chat that that was correct, there are two separate budgets.
 - Shanahan asked why Domestic Consumer PR support is still a line item, if we took it out of the budget in 2017. Heimbigner responded that just for prosperity.
 - Shanahan asked, likewise, why the media tour is in the Communications budget and not in the Domestic Consumer PR budget. Heimbigner responded that it is also included in Consumer PR, but sometimes we get last minute, one-off requests that make more sense for Communications to undertake. FY21 was the first time we had set aside specific funds for such opportunities.

Shanahan asked if the committee felt they had had adequate time to review the budget before moving on.

- Squibb noted that she wanted to make sure that the program had enough flexibility within the plan to pivot during such uncertain times. Carle echoed Squibb's suggestion to consider a contingency plan, but felt that the budget looked good.
- Heimbigner continued with the FY22 Consumer PR Budget overview, and gave kudos to Edelman for their hard work and flexibility.
 - Noted that the New York Media Event was very successful this year, even though it was held online. Based on its success, the program plans to replicate the approach with significant cost savings. Goldberg (Edelman) noted that savings from this year were repurposed into high ROI activities and partnerships.
 - FY22 budget proposes shifting from one large FAM to a few smaller, more targeted "mini-FAM's," which will provide cost savings and opportunity for more in-depth messaging.
- Shanahan asked Goldberg about what measurement tools they use. Goldberg answered that at Edelman they've identified tools to track coverage. They use Trendkite to generate weekly reports, Newswhip, Muckrack, among others to track where Alaska Seafood is being picked up. She said they are always looking for the latest and greatest tools and are always willing to shift, but have used those for the last several years and have found great value.

Carle made a motion to approve both the Communications and Consumer PR Budgets. Squibb seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Other Communications/Consumer PR Project Updates

- The Communications program is working with McKinley Research Group to survey and understand COVID-19 impacts on industry including continued regular briefings.
- The new website is a big project. We have been looking at wireframes and style tiles and looking at how we can improve our user experience, targeting a mid to late summer launch.
- The direct Marketer resources project continues to move forward.
- There are new resources in NetX – including hundreds of new high res assets, more coming over the summer and fall.
- The spring commercial fishing photo contest up and running.
- Planning is underway on the parchment product photo shoot.
- Tanna Peters added a new Sustainability webpage to wildalaskaseafood.com for consumer awareness.

A discussion began regarding the recently released film, Seaspiracy:

- Hathaway said that regarding Seaspiracy, her focus is going to be on the goal of the documentary, which is meant to turn people off seafood and meat in general. To be plant-based takes a lot of focus and nutritional education. Good nutrition is about variety and moderation - it's a holistic approach, and Alaska seafood fits well into that.
- Curry stressed that even when in casual conversation, we cannot call this a documentary. It is a drama.
- Kimball asked if ASMI was doing anything to assist trade with messaging. Heimbigner said that we had not created that, but it would certainly be within our scope. Kimball recommended that the committee use some of their time to provide messaging to companies who are getting questions. Even though the film didn't call out US or Alaska fisheries, there are things that are getting pulled out of it related to hatcheries and labor that don't involve Alaska but would be good to have a response.
- Hathaway recommended quick links for people to do their own research as a starting point.
- Carle was curious if ASMI engages delegation or anyone with political impact.
- Curry noted that a lot of young fishermen in Alaska have given a lot of thoughtful information on how the drama-series has been damaging.
- Kimball said that one of the questions coming is, "Why can't we trust eco labels?" That is what Alaska has been working on, and we have differentiated ourselves because of this issue. Heimbigner noted that one of ASMI's key points is to allow consumers to make it easy to cut through the overwhelming abundance of communication.
- Hathaway said that one thing she's been considering is that the hysterical response is making a mess that has to be untangled by someone else. It brings more people into the conversation, and will serve Alaska well as people are educated and come to the conclusion that Alaska is best. Everything that ASMI has done for the last forty years is what allows the young fishermen to respond that way.
- Shanahan noted that ASMI is in fact responding, but not drawing attention to the film itself. She wanted the committee to know that it is being addressed by ASMI.
- Lindoff commented that she doesn't want ASMI to be criticized for not responding, and to be accused of burying our heads in the sand. This is a moment to talk about our own certification program. Having a third-party verification is extremely important in the marketplace.
- Kimball noted that companies are getting very specific questions from major buyers.
- Heimbigner asked that with so much information discussed in the film, it would help guide ASMI's efforts if the committee can share any details of the questions/concerns they are receiving.

- Lindoff recommended that the CSC release a statement, and Heimbigner suggested that perhaps CSC and ASMI release a joint statement.

Shanahan asked if Heimbigner had any more updates. Heimbigner replied that she did not.

- Hathaway asked if influencers get primed during crises with accurate information. Goldberg responded that they absolutely do, during a crisis or not.
- Hathaway asked if Edelman had been getting any media questions regarding Seaspiracy, and Goldberg responded they actually had not.
- Squibb commented as a side note that the updates and emails that have been going out have been looking great.

IX. Old Business and Good of the Order

Shanahan proposed reducing the committee meeting cadence, and meeting just once later in the fall before All Hands. She said that subcommittee structure could be utilized as appropriate, and that all other program updates could be communicated over email.

Kimball and Heimbigner agreed with that approach.

Kimball asked if the work was done with the crisis subcommittee. Heimbigner said that the service was completed, and thanked everyone for their participation.

Heimbigner noted that Elnes had presented at ComFish the day before, and that the recording was on the ComFish website.

X. Adjourn

Squibb made a motion to adjourn, and Kimball seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55am.