



**Our Vision: The NGEC will provide national leadership in standardization, acquisition, and management of passenger rail equipment.**

## SECTION 305 NGEC Executive Board

MINUTES

APRIL 6, 2021

11:30 EASTERN

CONFERENCE CALL

<b>FACILITATOR</b>	<i>Ray Hessinger, Chair, S305 NGEC Executive Board</i>
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	<b>Board Members:</b> Ray Hessinger, George Hull, Tim Ziethen, Jeff Gordon, Amanda Martin, Amanda Martin also as proxy for Arun Rao and John Oimoen, Troy Hughes, Jon Dees for Jason Orthner, Momo Tamaoki for Kyle Gradinger, Momo Tamaoki also as proxy for Jason Biggs/Ron Pate, Mike Jenkins, Brian Beeler II <b>Support Staff and Colleagues:</b> Mike Murray, Joe Paul, Mike Kraft, Larry Salci, Steve Hewitt, Shayne Gill, Oscar Bermudez, Patrick Centolanzi, Dave "Emeritus" Warner
<b>ABSENTEES</b>	<b>Board Members:</b> Ron Pate, Jason Orthner, Arun Rao, Kyle Gradinger, John Oimoen, <b>Support:</b> Jason Biggs, Strat Cavros, Tammy Krause

### DECISIONS MADE

**1.**

**Welcome – Ray Hessinger, Chair, S305 NGEC Executive Board:**

Chairman Hessinger, NYSDOT, opened the meeting and asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll.

**2. Roll Call –Steve Hewitt, NGEC Program Manager:**

Steve Hewitt called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

**3.**

**Action items Review – Steve Hewitt:**

Steve Hewitt briefly reviewed the status of open action items not covered under the agenda this week and noted they will be included on the next call agenda, and the status of each is included in today's minutes (4-6-21).

**2021 NGEC Backgrounder educational document:**

The 2021 version of the NGEC two-page backgrounder/educational document has been released and is available electronically or in hard copy by request - contact Steve Hewitt at [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com).

If you would like to receive hard copies, contact Steve with the quantity and where to mail them.

**Update: States and Amtrak – Charger Locomotive Experience:**

In-depth updates were provided during the 2020 Annual Meeting and were included in the minutes (2-23-21).

The PowerPoint presentation was distributed and posted to the website.

**Next Update: As appropriate**

**METRA Equipment Procurement Effort:**

This item was tabled until John Oimoen receives an update from his contact at METRA. He will let Steve Hewitt and Ray Hessinger know when that is, and the item will be included on the following Board agenda.

On 4-6-21, Steve Hewitt stated that he will follow up with John Oimoen to see if he would be able to give an update on

this procurement.

**Next Update: As appropriate**

**Technical subcommittee review of the Access Board Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding accessibility guidelines for Rail vehicles:**

The intent of this effort is for states to submit their comments to the Access Board Docket on the Accessibility Requirement Guidelines Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. Amtrak has submitted its comments already and will share them with the Executive Board. Once the comments have come back from the Access Board and there is a Final Rule, the Technical subcommittee (through its technical working groups) will compare them with the NGEC specifications to ensure compliance and make any necessary changes by utilizing the NGEC DCR process.

On 8-20-20, Melissa Shurland reported to the Technical subcommittee, that the comment period ended on 7-14-20 (after having been extended to that date) and the Access Board is now processing those comments received. Melissa stated, "we are in a holding pattern to see what the comments were and what the Access Board's disposition of them will be." Melissa will keep the NGEC technical subcommittee informed as the process is completed.

As of 3-31-21 – the Access Board continues in its holding pattern.

**Next Update: As appropriate**

**VIA Rail Equipment Procurement:**

On 2-23-21 – during the NGEC Annual Meeting, VIA Rail provided a comprehensive update on its vehicle procurement.

The PowerPoint presentation was distributed and posted to the website.

**Next Update: As appropriate (possibly a 6-month update – 8-2021)**

**Amtrak Vehicle Procurements:**

CAF: Progress continues – with 2 more sleeper cars complete – there are 7 left.

Charger Locomotive – Also continues to progress well. The first unit is in testing and it is going well.

AmFleet replacement – is in the "cone of silence" period with discussions continuing with vendors.

Acela Express 21 (AE21) testing continues – they are addressing some modeling issues and evaluating schedule impacts.

**Next Update: 4-20-21**

**Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement:**

*Metro-North has awarded the Dual Mode Locomotive contract to Siemens. A get-start meeting was held on March 8<sup>th</sup> and design activities are now underway.*

**Next Update: 4-20-21**

**CtDOT Rail Car Procurement:**

As of 3-18-21, Marci Petterson reported that this procurement is in the "cone of silence" period.

**Next Update: 4-20-21**

**4.**

**Approval of the Minutes from the 3-23-21 Meeting -Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT:**

On a motion by Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT, and a second by Brian Beeler II for Maine DOT, the minutes from the 3-23-21 Meeting were approved as presented.

**5.**

**Update: Finance and Administrative subcommittee (FASC) 4-6-21 – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak:**

Tim Ziethen provided the following Treasurer's Report Invoices through December 2020:

Balance and Spend Rate (through December 2020):

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.

Amount Spent through December 2020: \$707,119.75.

Balance remaining: \$ 542,880.25.

Estimated spend at current rate for the remaining grant period (through 9-30-23): \$457,548.07.

Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$13,865.09.

Estimated Balance at the end of the Extension Period (Contingency): \$85,332.18

Tim also reported that he, Steve Hewitt, and Strat Cavros have been going back and forth to try to correct an email issue that is likely with Amtrak's server. Strat (confirmed by Shayne Gill) has sent the January and February invoices to Amtrak but, somehow, they have been getting lost in junk mail when sent to Tim Ziethen.

Tim has discussed this problem with Amtrak IT several times and will again.

Steve Hewitt noted that Amtrak's server is rejecting almost every email he sends if it has an attachment, so it is a broader problem.

Shayne Gill will provide the AASHTO invoices to Steve Hewitt following today's call and Steve will send on to Tim Ziethen's personal Gmail account.

FASC – Filling the first Vice Chair Vacancy:

Tim Ziethen reported that Brian Beeler II, for Maine DOT, has been appointed to the position of Vice Chair of the FASC. Brian fills the vacancy that was created by the retirement from state service of legacy NGENC member Brent Thompson, WSDOT.

Tim and Steve expressed their appreciation to Brent for his many years of active involvement in the NGENC and noted that they wish him well in his retirement.

Tim Ziethen expressed his appreciation to Brian Beeler II for "stepping up" and agreeing to fill the vacancy and further serve the NGENC and the FASC in particular.

## **6.**

### **Update – Multi-State Rail Car Procurement as of 4-6-21 – Momo Tamaoki, Caltrans:**

Momo Tamaoki provided the following update for inclusion in the minutes (4-6-21):

*Design review for the standard coach is complete. The Cab Car structure FDR is complete and the structural test plans are being coordinated with Caltrans, Siemens, and FRA. The Cab Car IDR phase is complete and FDR meetings are scheduled to resume in April. FDR meetings for the Caltrans Vending Car Electrical and Water/Waste are scheduled for April 7 and 14. IDOT Café Car reviews are nearly complete and open items are being addressed.*

*The Cab Car Compression Test setup will begin late April in Sacramento. NEC testing for standard coach is complete and the report is accepted by FRA. Caltrans 238.111 testing is complete, and the report has been submitted to Amtrak and FRA. IDOT 238.11 testing is complete, and the test report is under review.*

*75 cars total are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. There are currently twelve Caltrans cars at the Stockton Facility and twenty-six IDOT cars delivered to Chicago and Indiana. Additional cars are scheduled to ship in April. The initial consists for Caltrans and IDOT are being prepared for Conditional Acceptance and revenue service.*

## **7.**

### **Status: TSSSA Primer – George Hull, Amtrak:**

George Hull reported that the DRAFT primer "is still on my desk" and that he intends to get to it soon and move it to the next step in the process.

## **8.**

### **Federal Surface Transportation Authorization – NGENC Re-Authorization – Ray Hessinger:**

Ray Hessinger opened up discussion regarding the need to have the NGENC included in the upcoming Federal Surface Transportation Authorization bill. He noted that the NGENC itself is prohibited from lobbying, but individual members are not under such restrictions.

He reported on the recent opportunity he had (thank you AASHTO/Shayne Gill) to discuss the reauthorization of the NGEC with FRA leadership. He emphasized the importance of including it in the next bill. Ray was appreciative of the chance to have the conversation and to raise it with FRA leadership. Ray felt it was a productive discussion.

Ray asked Steve Hewitt to report on his recent interaction with the industry (industry members of the Technical subcommittee).

Steve reported that he sent an email to all NGEC Industry participants (around 200), explaining that the NGEC cannot lobby for itself, but that it is important that members of the industry weigh in with contacts they may have in Congress to ensure that the NGEC is reauthorized with funding. In the last Congress, the House passed its FAST Act successor legislation and inadvertently left out reauthorizing the NGEC. When asked about it, staff said it was an oversight and not intentional. Still, the concern is that the new Congress is using the last House bill as a basis for the next Federal Surface Transportation Authorization bill. It is critical that those who can carry the message to Congress to include the NGEC in the bill – do so.

Included in the email to the industry was the 2021 NGEC two-pager background document for use by members to help to educate congressional staff and others as to the value added by the NGEC and its many accomplishments achieved over the past 11 years.

Following the email, Steve heard from one industry member who asked if he could post the two-pager on LinkedIn. Steve told him it is a public document and that he should feel free to post it. The more eyes on it the better.

Steve also reported that this morning Steve Morrison, Siemens, called to ask about the issue to see what could be done. Steve Hewitt provided the history and told Steve Morrison that there did not seem to be any sort of opposition to reauthorizing the NGEC – but, because it operates out of the limelight and conducts its business under the radar – it got overlooked and is in danger of that happening again. Steve Hewitt also noted that the last time the NGEC was reauthorized (In the FASR Act) it was without funding. The NGEC has been judicious with its spending and has existed for 11 years on \$4 million in funds in total. The current request is for the NGEC to be reauthorized and provided with an authorization for funding in the amount of \$2.5 million over the life of the bill.

Steve Morrison noted that he believes that globally (beyond just Siemens) the NGEC is important and has added value and is filling its purpose of standardization and the impacts that has on lowering costs. He agreed it should be reauthorized as described by Steve Hewitt.

Steve Morrison will contact Siemens' lobbyist and ask that he contact Amtrak's Government Affairs (Ken Altman) to see how Amtrak can better carry the message. He will also ask his lobbyist to carry the message to congressional staff (House and Senate) who he talks to frequently.

Steve Hewitt noted that the States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC) sent a letter to the last Congress in September which enunciated the need to reauthorize the NGEC with funding and provided language that congressional staff could use in the bill. SPRC is in the process of updating that letter to submit to the new Congress. Steve Hewitt provided the new DRAFT letter and the previously submitted letter to Steve Morrison following the call this morning (4-6-21) and thanked Steve for his help.

Shayne Gill commented that talking to the industry was critical and effective. He also acknowledged that AASHTO has NGEC reauthorization in its Principles which will go to Congress as well.

Shayne also noted that NGEC Chairman Ray Hessinger did a great job in his discussion with the FRA as cited previously by Ray (above). Shayne added that the question came up about whether FRA should add a requirement that entities using federal funds for procurement of passenger rail equipment must use NGEC specifications (this was a requirement under ARRA funding, but not carried over in the FAST Act for other federal funding).

Ray did not oppose this idea but stressed the fact that the specifications are well received and well utilized nationally and internationally without the requirement and many users of those specs are not formal members of the NGEC. (VIA Rail, CtDOT, Brightline, Metro-North and more...) Ray sees this as a testament to the quality of the specifications and the cost savings derived from them (each spec has a value of about \$2 million).

Steve Hewitt added that the FRA discussed this concept years ago with the NGEC Board and stated that it could simply be a policy implemented by them that would require the use of NGEC specifications whenever federal funds are involved, but it has not happened to date.

## 9.

### **Update: Document Control Management – as of 4-6-21 - Tammy Krause:**

- *The Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices Document final version is complete and has been*

sent to AASHTO for posting on the website.

- I have been creating the DMU specification DCRs proposed by Stadler Rail. I have sent out the Electrical, Interiors, Mechanical, Propulsion and Cab DCRs to the WG leaders. I hope to finish the rest by the end of this week.
- I have received additional DCRs for the Trainset and those will be going out to the WG leaders this week also.

**10.**

**Access to PRIIA 305-200 – Recommended Practices – Ray Hessinger:**

Ray Hessinger expressed his view that the Recommended Practices document 305-200 be posted prominently on the NGE website so that it can be accessed outside of the usual procedures applied to NGE specs and reference documents and drawings. Currently there is a list of all NGE documents on the website and when a request for one of them is made it generates a request to Steve Hewitt who then send it out. Ray would like the Recommended Practices document to be available without going through that process as it is an invaluable tool and should be readily available.

AASHTO suggested that, if this is the way the Board goes, it could be posted on the main page of the website.

There were no objections to Ray's proposal. Jeff Gordon noted that, while he had no objection to this, the current process is not burdensome and does provide a sense of who is interested in PRIIA documents and who are requesting them etc. Steve Hewitt agreed that this was his initial thought as well. It is good to know, generally, what the level of interest is.

Ray asked AASHTO to look into whether or not the website can be set up to track the number of times documents are accessed. Oscar Bermudez, AASHTO, will look into this. It is not something that is happening now.

Steve Hewitt added that the approved document was sent out to all NGE members, so they do have it, but, of course, they get lost in the shuffle sometimes so having easy access will be beneficial in that sense. He also noted that, good or bad, most members go directly to Steve Hewitt with requests. They "take a shortcut" and do not go to the website.

In the meantime, without objection, Ray Hessinger has asked AASHTO to post 305-200 to the main page of the website.

**11.**

**Other:**

With no other business forthcoming, Chairman Hessinger adjourned today's meeting (4-6-21) at 12:10pm.

**The meeting - 4-20-21.**

**Decisions/Action Items**

**Update – Multi-State Rail Car Procurement as of 4-6-21:**

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**Task Complete**

**2021 NGEC Backgrounder educational document:**

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**Next Update: as appropriate**

**Developing a template – TSSSA:**

The DRAFT primer has been developed by Amtrak Mechanical and is currently being reviewed by George Hull. Once he has reviewed it, it will be sent as DRAFT to Tammy Krause to begin the NGEC process for consideration.

**Next Update: 4-6-21**

**Updates: States and Amtrak – Charger Locomotive Experience:**

In-depth updates were provided during the Annual Meeting and were included in the minutes.

The presentations were distributed and posted to the website.

**Next Update: as appropriate**

**Status Update – Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement:**

As of 3-18-21, Marci Petterson reported to the Technical subcommittee that this procurement is in the "cone of silence" phase.

**Next Update – as appropriate**

**Reauthorizing the NGEC:**

The need to be reauthorized has been discussed. The NGEC, as a body, cannot lobby Congress – but individual members can. Information on the NGEC. and suggested bill language, has been provided to members of the industry, Amtrak, AASHTO, SPRC and states.

This will remain an open item for periodic discussion as to steps to take to convey the message.

**Access to PRIIA 305-200 – Recommended Practices – Ray Hessinger:**

Ray Hessinger expressed his view that the Recommended Practices document 305-200 be posted prominently on the NGECC website so that it can be accessed outside of the usual procedures applied to NGECC specs and reference documents and drawings. Currently there is a list of all NGECC documents on the website and when a request for one of them is made it generates a request to Steve Hewitt who then send it out. Ray would like the Recommended Practices document to be available without going through that process as it is an invaluable tool and should be readily available.

AASHTO suggested that, if this is the way the Board goes, it could be posted on the main page of the website.

Without objection, Chairman Hessinger asked AASHTO to post 305-200 to the main page of the website.

**S305 NGECC Executive Board Conference Call**

**4-6-21**

**11:30 AM – 12:30 PM Eastern**

**By computer:**

<https://stephenhewitthewittconsulting.my.webex.com/meet/shewitt109>

**By phone:**

**1-415-655-0001**

**Access code:**

**126-073-1531**

**Agenda**

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|--|----------------|
| 1. Welcome and Open the Meeting  | Ray Hessinger  |
| 2. Roll Call   | Steve Hewitt   |
| 3. Action Items Status Review  | Steve Hewitt   |
| 4. Approval of Minutes from 3-23-21 Meeting                              | Ray Hessinger  |
| 5. Treasurer’s Report – Balance/Spend Rate                               | Tim Ziethen    |
| 6. Update: Multi-State Car Procurement                                   | Kyle Gradinger |
| 7. Status: TSSSA Primer  | George Hull    |
| 8. Federal Surface Transportation Authorization – NGECC Re-Authorization | Ray Hessinger  |
| 9. Update: Document Control Management                                   | Tammy Krause   |
| 10. Access to PRIIA 305-200 -Recommended Practices                       | Ray Hessinger  |
| 11. Other  | All            |

**Next call/meeting - 4-20-21**