

SECTION 305 FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES

AUGUST 19,
2020

3:00PM EASTERN

CONFERENCE CALL

FACILITATOR	<i>Tim Ziethen, Chair of the S305 Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)</i>
ATTENDEES	<i>Tim Ziethen, Brent Thompson, John Oimoen, Jeff Gordon for Michael Lestingi, Ray Hessinger, Amanda Martin, Troy Hughes, Arun Rao, Mike Murray, Brian Beeler II, Shayne Gill, Strat Cavros, Oscar Bermudez, Steve Hewitt</i>
ABSENTEES	<i>Michael Lestingi, Larry Salci</i>

DECISIONS MADE

1. Welcome and Open Meeting – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak:

Subcommittee Chair, Tim Ziethen, Amtrak, opened the conference call meeting and asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll.

2. Roll Call – Steve Hewitt:

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

3. Approval of Minutes from the 7-23-20 conference call – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak:

On a motion by John Oimoen, IDOT, and a second by Brian Beeler II for Maine DOT, the minutes from 7-23-20 were approved as presented.

4. Treasurer’s Update – Tim Ziethen:

Tim Ziethen provided the following Treasurer’s update through June 2020:

Balance/Spend Rate:

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

Amount Spent: \$643,857.54

Balance remaining: \$ 606,142.46

Anticipated spending through the remainder of the current grant period: approximately \$63,899.38

Estimated balance remaining at the end of the current grant period (9-30-20): \$542,243.08

Approximate current spend rate: \$14,633.13

Average Monthly expenditure estimated for the extension period is: \$15,000.00

Amount utilized if the Grant is extended for 36 months at estimated spend rate: \$540,000.00

Projected total remaining at the end of the 36-month extension: \$2,243.08

Grant Agreement extension request:

Tim Ziethen reported that FRA continues to work through the final steps for the no-cost grant agreement extension approval. Some minor adjustments were requested. Amtrak made the adjustments and sent back to FRA – for its review. Tim anticipates the final review will be completed in the next week or two.

Mike Murray, FRA, reported that he spoke to FRA grants and confirmed that it is moving along well, and it is expected to be finalized by the first week in September.

5. Status Update: NGEN Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices/Lessons Learned Document – Steve Hewitt:

As reported previously the working group last met on 6-25-20 to go over comments received on the most recent draft. It was a productive session with all comments addressed in one way or another. The title of the document was agreed on by the working group members as "Recommended Practices".

Some edits suggested on the 6-25-20 call required additional rewriting to address comments made and will be incorporated into an updated DRAFT and there will be another round of working group review.

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on 7-30-20, but, that call was canceled, and because we still have not received the updated DRAFT, it has not yet been rescheduled. It will only be scheduled when the updated version has been received and circulated. The intent continues to be to give working group members at least two weeks for review. It is hoped that this will be the last round of reviews by the working group before advancing the DRAFT to the Executive Board for its review and comment.

Once the working group has approved the DRAFT document, the Executive Board will be provided at least two weeks of review prior to discussion on a subsequent Board call.

Last status report from Document Control Manager Tammy Krause was that the updates have been provided to the technical writer, Camren Cordell, and Tammy anticipated getting the updated version over the next week or so. Thus far that has not happened – but we hope to hear from Tammy on tomorrow's technical subcommittee call as to where things stand.

6.
Status: Conveying the Message – Steve Hewitt:

As stated previously, one of the NGEC Grant requirements is to develop and maintain an educational document to provide congress and others (states, Amtrak, industry) with information describing what the NGEC is, what it does, and to highlight its accomplishments.

The FASC oversees this effort with Executive Board approval. In January 2020, the NGEC released this year's version of the document. To date about 410 hard copies and electronic versions have been distributed. Overall, in the past 16 months we have distributed more than 1300 copies.

It remains available, by request, from Steve Hewitt in both versions hard copy and PDF and is useful in conveying the message – (something that is critical with reauthorization on the table).

With Reauthorization beginning to take shape – at least in the House - it should be noted that, reauthorization of the NGEC is not in the House version of the bill. The NGEC cannot lobby or advocate, which does make it difficult, but other organizations including AASHTO, SPRC, CSG-ERC do have the NGEC reauthorization in their principles.

SPRC, which has already informed House and Senate members of its' support for reauthorizing the NGEC by including it in its authorizing principles, is now in the process of providing the Senate with proposed language (using what was previously developed within the NGEC for other organizations to use) emphasizing the importance of reauthorizing and funding the NGEC.

Steve Hewitt, again, recommended that states check with their government affairs offices individually so that this issue can be worked through their channels and that AASHTO and Amtrak also re-enforce the request.

Tim Ziethen reported that he spoke to Ken Altman, Amtrak Government Affairs, and Ken confirmed that Amtrak had included the NGEC authorization in a pot of funds for eligible activities when they submitted their authorization requests. Ken confirmed that it was missed in the House bill (the bill is silent on 305/NGEC) He asked Tim for some additional information – such as who is on the committee and what are the risks if it is not reauthorized etc. Tim will provide Ken with the response in a 3-bullet paragraph.

Shayne Gill, AASHTO, confirmed that NGEC authorization was included in their principles for authorization and he will do some follow-up with Senate Commerce – which has not produced a bill yet. He also noted that it is quite unlikely that Congress will enact the FAST Act successor over the next 60 days and, if that would mean it would need to be brought back up in the next Congress so there will be additional opportunities for outreach on both the Senate and House side.

7.
Status: Overview: 3rd Quarter Grant Progress Report to FRA – Tim Ziethen:

Tim Ziethen reported that he had submitted the 3rd Quarter report to FRA – there had been some feedback – and

several "final" versions of the report. Tim will check his files to be sure that he had sent Steve Hewitt the Final version. Steve believe that he did get the last version and it is the one that he sent to the Board members and the FASC members. Tim will double check.

The next report is due October 31, 2020.

8.

Other Issues/Questions – All:

Adjourn:

With no further business forthcoming, Chairman Ziethen adjourned today's meeting at 3:25pm Eastern.

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

by phone: 1-415-655-0001

Access code: 126-073-1531

Next call – 9-16-20

Decisions - Action Items

Treasurer's Report – 8-19-20:

On 8-19-20, Tim Ziethen provided the following Treasurer's report which includes expenditures through June 2020:

Balance/Spend Rate:

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

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Mike Murray, FRA, reported that he spoke to FRA grants and confirmed that it is moving along well, and it is expected to be finalized by the first week in September.

Conveying the message as of 8-19-20:

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Overview: Quarterly Grant Progress Report to FRA:

The quarterly report for the period ending 6-30-20 was submitted to FRA on time on 7-30-20.

The next quarterly report will be for the period ending 9-30-20 and will be due to FRA by 10-31-20.

Status Update: NGEC Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices Working Group as of 8-19-20:

The group last met on 6-25-20 to go over comments received on the most recent draft. It was a productive session with all comments addressed in one way or another. The title of the document was agreed on by the working group members. Unless the Executive Board has a different name for it, the document will be titled "Recommended Practices".

Some edits suggested on the 6-25-20 call required additional rewriting to address comments made and will be incorporated into an updated DRAFT and there will be another round of working group review.

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on 7-30-20, but, as of today, because we have not received the updated DRAFT, Chairman Hessinger asked Steve Hewitt to cancel the call. It will be rescheduled once the updated version has been received and circulated. The intent is to give working group members at least two weeks for review. It is hoped that this will be the last round of reviews by the working group before advancing the DRAFT to the Executive Board for its review and comment.

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Next Call 9-16-20

ATTACHMENTS



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

SECTION 305 NGEC Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)

Web Ex video/audio information:

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/Open | Tim Ziethen |
| 2. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approval of the Minutes from 7-22-20 | Tim Ziethen |
| 4. Treasurer's Update | Tim Ziethen |
| a. Balance-Spend Rate | |
| b. Status: Grant Agreement No-Cost 36 months Extension Request | |
| 5. Status: NGEC Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices Document | Steve Hewitt |
| 6. Status: Conveying the Message – Reauthorization of the NGEC | Steve Hewitt |
| 7. Overview: 3rd Quarter Grant Progress Report to FRA – submitted 7-31-20 | Tim Ziethen |
| 8. Other Issues/questions | All |

Next Call September 16, 2020