

SECTION 305 FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES MAY 27, 2020 3:00PM EASTERN CONFERENCE CALL

FACILITATOR	<i>Tim Ziethen, Chair of the S305 Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)</i>
ATTENDEES	<i>Tim Ziethen, John Oimoen, Jeff Gordon for Michael Lestingi, Amanda Martin, Amanda Martin also as proxy for Arun Rao, Ray Hessinger, Troy Hughes, Brian Beeler II, Shayne Gill, Strat Cavros, Steve Hewitt</i>
ABSENTEES	<i>Michael Lestingi, Arun Rao, Brent Thompson, 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 4-29-20 conference call – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak:

On a motion by John Oimoen, IDOT, and a second by Troy Hughes, MODOT, the minutes from 4-29-20 were approved as presented.

4. Treasurer’s Update – Tim Ziethen:

Tim Ziethen provided the following Treasurer’s update:

Balance/Spend Rate:

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.
 Amount Spent: \$579,201.22 (through March 2020)
 Balance remaining: \$ 670,798.78
 Estimated balance remaining at the end of the current grant period (9-30-20) - \$568,055
 Average Monthly expenditure estimated for the extension period is: \$15,000.00 (just above current spend rate)
 Amount utilized if the Grant is extended for 36 months at estimated spend rate \$540,000
 Projected total remaining at the end of the 36-month extension: \$28,000

Grant Agreement extension request update:

FRA Grants has reached out to Amtrak Grants suggesting that the grant agreement extension request amend the performance period to include the first 26 months and add the requested 26 months making the grant performance period 72 months.

Tim Ziethen commented that this is really what the extension meant to do so this amendment/clarification is fine, and he will let the grants people know.

FRA also asked that the NGEC budget be reviewed to see if there are any changes to be made at this time within categories/tasks.

Tim Ziethen explained that in conducting a review of the budget – he noted that there is \$100,00 in it for two audits to be conducted by Amtrak’s OIG at \$50,000 each. The first would take during the performance period and the second would be at the end of the grant period.

Since the initial execution of the grant and approval of the budget, it has been determined that it is no longer anticipated that the NGEC will incur these costs because it will be covered by the general audit of all Amtrak grants.

Tim noted that there are two options – re-purpose the money or leave it alone, for now, understanding that the NGEC Executive Board has the authority to shift money within the various budget line items as it has done in shifting Amtrak support to AASHTO support for the Document Manager position.

Tim's thoughts were that it makes no sense to do it right now – leave it as it is and come back to it through normal channels which would be a recommendation by the FASC to the Executive Board with its subsequent action at the appropriate time.

Steve Hewitt was asked for his counsel on this issue and he noted that since the Board has the authority to move money with the budget, it would make sense to not amend it now, rather to leave it and address it once the NGEC has a specific purpose for expending those funds. He noted that this would mean there is no change to the budget to be requested of FRA as a part of the grant extension request.

Ray Hessinger, NGEC Chair, agreed with Tim and Steve that there is no need to amend the budget now within the extension request – better to leave as is and use the Board's authority to move it at the appropriate time.

With no further discussion forthcoming, Tim Ziethen formally recommended that Amtrak grants be directed to inform FRA grants that a budget review has been completed, and there are no immediate changes to the budget distribution at this time.

John Oimoen, IDOT, offered a motion to accept the recommendation of Chairman Ziethen. A second was offered by Troy Hughes, MODOT.

After asking if there was any further discussion and/or any objections, Tim Ziethen determined that consensus has been achieved and the motion is approved.

In his next report to the NGEC Executive Board (6-16-20) he will inform the Board members of this action as a part of his update on the progress of the grant extension request.

5.

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

The DRAFT document which was compiled and reformatted by Camren Cordell, was distributed to the Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Working group with a request for comments by 5-14-20. To date 3 working group members have submitted track change documents and a 4th has given a general comment. All comments were sent to Tammy Krause, NGEC Document Control Manager for compiling and updating into a revised DRAFT.

The working group has a call tomorrow (5-28-20) to go over the DRAFT and the comments. Steve expects there will be additional comments brought forth on the call or thereafter and they will be submitted to Tammy Krause.

The working group will also begin to outline next steps and a path forward for ultimate completion of this critical document. Steve noted "as our past Chairman (Eric Curtit) always stated 'we want this to be right not rushed' – so we will take the time we need to get it done properly".

6.

Status: Conveying the Message – Steve Hewitt:

One of the NGEC Grant requirements is to develop and keep updated an educational document to provide congress and others (states, Amtrak, industry) with information describing what the NGEC is and what it does, and to highlight its accomplishments.

The FASC oversees this effort with Executive Board approval. In January 2020, the NGEC released its updated background and educational document. To date over 400 hard copies and electronic versions have been distributed. Overall, in the past 15 months we have distributed more than 1300 copies of the most recent versions of the educational document.

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).

As the year progresses, particularly if reauthorization heats up, the FASC will take another look at this document and update it as appropriate and redistribute it.

**7.
Other Issues/Questions – All:**

Adjourn:

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

The next call is scheduled for June 24, 2019

The call-in number is:

888 585-9008 passcode 559-120-127#

Decisions - Action Items

Treasurer's Report – 5-27-20:

Tim Ziethen provided the following Treasurer's update:

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Balance remaining: \$ 670,798.78

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Amount utilized if the Grant is extended for 36 months at estimated spend rate \$540,000

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FRA also asked that the NGEC budget be reviewed to see if there are any changes to be made at this time within categories/tasks.

Tim Ziethen explained that in conducting a review of the budget – he noted that there is \$100,00 in it for two audits to be conducted by Amtrak's OIG at \$50,000 each. The first would take during the performance period and the second would be at the end of the grant period.

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John Oimoen, IDOT, offered a motion to accept the recommendation of Chairman Ziethen. A second was offered

by Troy Hughes, MODOT.

After asking if there was any further discussion and/or any objections, Tim Ziethen determined that consensus has been achieved and the motion is approved.

The Executive Board will be updated on the FRA feedback and the FASC response during the 6-16-20 Executive Board call.

Conveying the message:

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Overview: Quarterly Grant Progress Report to FRA:

The quarterly report for the period ending 3-31-20 was submitted to FRA on time on 4-30-20.

The next quarterly report will be for the period ending June 30, 2020 and will be due to FRA by July 31, 2020.

Status Update: NGEC Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices Working Group:

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888 585-9008 passcode 559-120-127#
Next Call 6-24-20

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)

**Conference call
5-27-2020
3:00PM Eastern
888 585-9008 passcode 559-120-127#**

AGENDA

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|---|--------------|
| 1. Welcome/Open | Tim Ziethen |
| 2. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approval of the Minutes from 4-29-20 | Tim Ziethen |
| 4. Treasurer's Update | Tim Ziethen |
| a. Balance-Spend Rate | |
| b. Status: Grant Agreement No-Cost 36 months Extension Request | |
| 5. Status: NGEN Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices Document | Steve Hewitt |
| 6. Status: Conveying the Message | Steve Hewitt |
| 7. Other Issues/questions | All |

Next Call June 24, 2020

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