

SECTION 305 FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 16,
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, Mike Murray for Michael Lestingi, Ray Hessinger, Ray Hessinger also as proxy for Brent Thompson, Amanda Martin, Troy Hughes, Arun Rao, Brian Beeler II, Shayne Gill, Oscar Bermudez, Steve Hewitt</i>
ABSENTEES	<i>Brent Thompson, Michael Lestingi, Jeff Gordon, 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 8-19-20 conference call – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak:

On a motion by John Oimoen, IDOT, and a second by Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT, the minutes from 8-19-20 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: \$643,857.54.

Balance remaining: \$ 606,142.46.

Anticipated spending through the remainder of the current grant period: approximately \$43,899.38.

Estimated balance remaining at the end of the current grant period (9-30-20): \$562,243.08.

Approximate current spend rate: \$14,107.

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: \$22,243.08.

Grant Agreement extension request:

Tim Ziethen reported the "good news" – the NGEC 36 month no cost grant agreement extension request has been approved and officially executed by FRA and Amtrak. The extension utilizes current funding with no additional funds and extends the NGEC grant agreement through 9-30-23.

Steve Hewitt will circulate the official documentation (as provided today by Tim Ziethen) to members of the NGEC Executive Board and Finance and Administrative subcommittee (FASC).

Tim expressed his thanks and appreciation to the FRA and Amtrak grants offices for their efforts in getting the extension executed.

5.

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

On 9-8-20, during the Executive Board call, Document Control Manager Tammy Krause reported that the Technical Writer (Cameron Cordell) was completing what would be the 4th revision of the "Recommended Practices" document. Tammy reported that the completed revision would be ready to go to the working group members by 9-11-20. As of today, 9-16-20, that has not happened. On the Technical subcommittee call on 9-17-20, Steve Hewitt will ask Tammy what the status is.

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.

6.

Status: Conveying the Message – Reauthorization of the NGEN - Steve Hewitt:

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

The States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC), which has already informed House and Senate members of its' support for reauthorizing the NGEN by including it in its authorizing principles, is now in the process of finalizing a package to send to Senate Commerce with a copies to the House side.

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.

While it is quite unlikely that Congress will enact the FAST Act successor in this Congress, and that would mean it would need to be brought back up in the next Congress, it is still good to get on the record – again – and to be prepared to do further outreach on both the Senate and House side as the new Congress convenes.

Arun Rao, Chairman of SPRC and a member of the NGEN executive Board and FASC confirmed Steve's report that SPRC's package is under final review and will be going out soon.

Tim Ziethen confirmed that he has contacted Ken Altman to ensure that this continues to be a part of Amtrak's reauthorization requests. Ken confirmed that they did include it and would continue to do so. He asked Tim for some additional information which Tim has drafted and will provide to Steve Hewitt for his review and comment.

Shayne Gill confirmed that AASHTO did include the NGEN reauthorization in its authorization request and he agreed that it is helpful to make the request to Senate Commerce and to also send the request to the House T&I Committee. He also noted that it was likely left out of the House bill simply because it was missed rather than intentionally left out.

Shayne also noted that there has been discussion on the Hill of passing a one-year clean extension of the FAST Act rather than let it expire on 9-30-20.

Steve Hewitt added that, because the NGEN was reauthorized in the FAST Act – a clean extension would mean it would also be included in a clean extension.

There was no funding included in the FAST Act reauthorization of the NGEN, but the 36 month no-cost grant agreement extension will enable the NGEN to continue its work for the life of the agreement.

The SPRC request will include an authorization for \$2.5 million over the life of the bill.

7.

Begin the annual review of the NGEN By-Laws – set timeline – Tim/Steve:

Steve Hewitt reminded FASC members that one of its responsibilities (as identified in the grant agreement) is to conduct an annual review of the NGEN By-Laws. The usual process is for Steve Hewitt and the NGEN Secretary and FASC Vice Chair (John Oimoen) to do the initial review in the Fall and to provide recommendations to the

FASC for its consideration (Could be changes – could be no changes recommended). The FASC would then vote on the recommendation and submit it to the Executive Board. If there are changes recommended, the Executive Board must have them in writing for 30 days prior to a vote on them.

The first step is for Chairman Ziethen to assign the review to Steve Hewitt and John Oimoen. Steve and John would plan to provide recommendations during the October 14th call of the FASC.

The goal would be to complete the process by the January 2021 meeting of the Executive Board so that the By-Laws can be updated and distributed during the NGEAC Annual Meeting in February 2021.

Tim Ziethen asked Steve Hewitt and John Oimoen to begin the review of the By-Laws and both agreed to do so. They will provide an update on their progress on the next FASC call (10-14-20).

**8.
Begin review and update of the NGEAC two-page handout – Tim/Steve:**

The NGEAC two-pager is always reviewed and updated annually with the goal to have it ready for distribution by TRB in January and at the NGEAC Annual Meeting in February.

This year, the document may need to be updated fairly significantly to show the progress made with next generation equipment being put into service and with the number of entities utilizing the NGEAC specifications growing.

First step would be to ask for several FASC members to volunteer to review the document and suggest changes. In years past MODOT (Eric Curtit) took the lead in making the agreed upon changes and the MODOT graphics office created the document and printed the copies.

Troy Hughes, MODOT agreed to check in with the MODOT graphics department to see if they would be willing to do the formatting and printing of the document and he will report back to the FASC on the next call.

Tim Ziethen, Steve Hewitt, Ray Hessinger and Troy Hughes volunteered to form a sub-group to review and make recommendations for updating the document. The intent would be to have recommendations ready by the next FASC call (10-14-20).

Steve Hewitt will provide the current version to members of the sub-group following today's call.

**9.
Other Issues/Questions – All:**

Adjourn:

With no further business forthcoming, Chairman Ziethen adjourned today's meeting at 3:30pm Eastern.

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

by phone: 1-415-655-0001

Access code: 126-073-1531

Next call – 10-14-20

Decisions - Action Items

Treasurer's Report – 9-16-20:

On 9-16-20, Tim Ziethen provided the following Treasurer's report:

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 \$43,899.38.
Estimated balance remaining at the end of the current grant period (9-30-20): \$562,243.08.
Approximate current spend rate: \$14,107.
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: \$22,243.08.

Grant Agreement extension request – Approved and Executed:

Tim Ziethen reported the “good news” – the NGEC 36 month no cost grant agreement extension request has been approved and officially executed by FRA and Amtrak. The extension utilizes current funding with no additional funds and extends the NGEC grant agreement through 9-30-23.

Steve Hewitt will circulate the official documentation (as provided today by Tim Ziethen) to members of the NGEC Executive Board and Finance and Administrative subcommittee (FASC).

Conveying the message:

Reauthorizing the NGEC in the FAST Act successor:

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.

The States for Passenger Rail Coalition (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 finalizing a package to send to Senate Commerce with a copies to the House side.

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.

While it is quite unlikely that Congress will enact the FAST Act successor in this Congress, and that would mean it would need to be brought back up in the next Congress, it is still good to get on the record – again – and to be prepared to do further outreach on both the Senate and House side as the new Congress convenes.

Arun Rao, Chairman of SPRC and a member of the NGEC executive Board and FASC confirmed Steve’s report that SPRC’s package is under final review and will be going out soon.

Tim Ziethen confirmed that he has contacted Ken Altman to ensure that this continues to be a part of Amtrak’s reauthorization requests. Ken confirmed that they did include it and would continue to do so. He asked Tim for some additional information which Tim has drafted and will provide to Steve Hewitt for his review and comment.

Shayne Gill confirmed that AASHTO did include the NGEC reauthorization in its authorization request and he agreed that it is helpful to make the request to Senate Commerce and to also send the request to the House T&I Committee. He also noted that it was likely left out of the House bill simply because it was missed rather than intentionally left out.

Review and update of the NGEC two-page handout:

The NGEC two-pager is always reviewed and updated annually with the goal to have it ready for distribution by TRB in January and at the NGEC Annual Meeting in February.

This year, the document may need to be updated fairly significantly to show the progress made with next generation equipment being put into service and with the number of entities utilizing the NGEC specifications growing.

First step would be to ask for several FASC members to volunteer to review the document and suggest changes. In years past MODOT (Eric Curtit) took the lead in making the agreed upon changes and the MODOT graphics office created the document and printed the copies.

Troy Hughes, MODOT agreed to check in with the MODOT graphics department to see if they would be willing to do the formatting and printing of the document and he will report back to the FASC on the next call.

Tim Ziethen, Steve Hewitt, Ray Hessinger and Troy Hughes volunteered to form a sub-group to review and make

recommendations for updating the document. The intent would be to have recommendations ready by the next FASC call (10-14-20).

Steve Hewitt will provide the current version to members of the sub-group following today's call.

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: NGEN Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices Working Group development of "Recommended Practices" document as of 9-16-20:

On 9-8-20, during the Executive Board call, Document Control Manager Tammy Krause reported that the Technical Writer (Cameron Cordell) was completing what would be the 4th revision of the "Recommended Practices" document. Tammy reported that the completed revision would be ready to go to the working group members by 9-11-20. As of today, 9-16-20, that has not happened. On the Technical subcommittee call on 9-17-20, Steve Hewitt will ask Tammy what the status is.

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.

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

by phone: 1-415-655-0001

Access code: 126-073-1531

Next Call 10-14-20

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

9-16-20

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Welcome/Open | Tim Ziethen |
| 2. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approval of the Minutes from 8-19-20 | Tim Ziethen |
| 4. Treasurer's Update | Tim Ziethen |
| a. Balance-Spend Rate | |
| b. Status: Execution of the 36 month No-Cost Grant Agreement Extension / next steps? | |
| 5. Status: NGEC Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices Document | Steve Hewitt |
| 6. Status: Conveying the Message – Reauthorization of the NGEC | Steve Hewitt |
| 7. Begin the annual review of the NGEC By-Laws – set timeline | Tim/Steve |
| 8. Begin review and update of the NGEC two-page handout | Tim/Steve |
| 9. Other Issues/questions | All |

Next Call October 14, 2020