

SECTION 305 FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES MARCH 31, 2021 3:00PM EASTERN CONFERENCE CALL

FACILITATOR	<i>Tim Ziethen, Chair of the S305 Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)</i>
ATTENDEES	<i>Tim Ziethen, Amanda Martin, Amanda Martin also as proxy for Arun Rao, John Oimoen, Jeff Gordon, Brian Beeler II, Ray Hessinger, Troy Hughes, Shayne Gill, Strat Cavros, Oscar Bermudez, Steve Hewitt</i>
ABSENTEES	<i>Arun Rao, Jason Biggs, Larry Salci, Mike Murray</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 1-6-21 conference call – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak:

On a motion by Brian Beeler II, for Maine DOT, and a second by John Oimoen, IDOT, the minutes from 1-6-21 were approved as presented.

4. Filling the FASC 1st Vice Chair Vacancy – Tim Ziethen:

Tim Ziethen called for a volunteer from one of the state members to fill the vacancy of First Vice Chair which was created by the retirement of Brent Thompson, WSDOT. (Brent was the first and only Vice Chair of the FASC and will be missed. We thank Brent for his years of dedication and service to the NGEC)

Steve Hewitt explained the minimal responsibilities of the position and First Vice Chair and explained its history which included the merger of the Finance subcommittee with the Administrative Task Force into one standing subcommittee and the creation of a First Vice Chair – basically for the Finance side; and Second Vice Chair from the Administrative side.

Timm agreed to table this discussion until later in today’s meeting, to give state members a chance to think about what they heard and see if a volunteer would step forward.

5. Treasurer’s Update – Tim Ziethen:

Tim Ziethen provided the following Treasurer’s update:

- a. 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

Strat Cavros, AASHTO, reported that he had submitted January invoices and is about to send the February invoices.

Tim Ziethen asked that Strat resend the January invoices as he has not received them. Once Tim has January and February, he will update the Balance and Spend Rate report and send it to Steve Hewitt. The next Quarterly Grant Report to FRA due to by the end of April 2021.

6.

Conveying the message (Federal Surface Transportation Authorization) - Tim/Steve:

Steve Hewitt reviewed the tools the NGEC has for conveying the NGEC message and for urging other associations and agencies to put forth that message to ensure that Congress includes the reauthorization of the NGEC (PRIIA Section 305) with funding in its successor to the FAST Act. Steve provided a background on past support and on the steps needed to ensure that support for inclusion of the NGEC is reiterated to the new Congress.

a. 2021 NGEC two-page handout:

The 2021 NGEC two-pager is now available in hard copy and electronically. It should be used by states and related organizations to educate Congress on what the NGEC is and what it has accomplished. It is a great tool to use to convey the message.

b. Ensuring others – SPRC, Amtrak, AASHTO – keep the NGEC on Congress' radar

It is important that we press agencies and organizations within the Rail community to help get the NGEC message out and to request that it be reauthorized and funded in the next Surface Transportation authorization legislation.

In the last Congress, AASHTO, SPRC, and to some extent Amtrak, included it in their authorization principles, but it was left out of the House bill drafted at that time.

The new Congress is using the House bill as the basis in developing its bill. The NGEC will need our sister agencies and associations to reaffirm their requests that the NGEC be included in the new bill proposal. In the last Congress, staff developing the bill, did say that the fact that the NGEC was not in their DRAFT proposal was simply an oversight. The issue now is to correct that omission and make sure it gets in this bill.

Tim Ziethen noted that Amtrak has included the NGEC in its reauthorization principles in a group along with other authorized programs under its oversight. He will reach out to Ken Altman, Amtrak Government Affairs, to see if there is something that can be done to reinforce the NGEC support.

Shayne Gill stated that AASHTO included it in their last set of Reauthorization principles and has it, once again, in its latest set of principles to be conveyed to Congress.

Steve Hewitt pointed out that SPRC included it with expanded language in its Authorization Principles several weeks ago, and has conveyed those Principles to the new Congress. Steve will reach out to SPRC Chair. Arun Rao, to suggest that they send a separate letter with language to Congressional staff in support of the NGEC. They did this in the last Congress but will need to do it again.

Tim Ziethen asked if the NGEC does not get authorized, does it mean the committee must stop its work even though it is funded through 2023? No one on the call knows for certain, but the general sense is that, if the current grant extension allows for the funds to be available until expended.

Jeff Gordon, FRA, will talk to the grants people at FRA to get clarification. Tim Ziethen will also talk to Amtrak grants to get their view on this.

Steve Hewitt reiterated that this clarification is important to ensure the continuation of the NGEC work through 9-30-23 but emphasized that it remains critical that language in the next bill not only reauthorizes the NGEC but includes an authorization for funding. In the FAST Act the NGEC was reauthorized but did not include funding.

Shayne Gill noted that it is important to also reach out to the industry members of the NGEC to encourage them to make Congress aware of the importance of reauthorizing the NGEC and to include

funding for it. Shayne also noted that specific members of the industry have benefitted from the NGEC in the recent equipment procurements.

c. NGEC State Members working with their Government Affairs offices

The states Government Affairs offices should include the NGEC two-pager as a part of its interaction with Congress in its reauthorization packets wherever possible.

d. Plan of Action :

Jeff Gordon will seek clarification from FRA on the status of the current grant agreement in the event that the NGEC is not reauthorized.

Tim Ziethen will ask for clarification from Amtrak grants and talk to Ken Altman to see if there is anything further that can be done to ensure that Amtrak conveys the message that the NGEC needs to be reauthorized with funding.

Shayne Gill will continue to keep this on the radar at AASHTO as they put forth their Principles to the new Congress.

Steve Hewitt will follow up with SPRC to encourage a separate request be sent to congressional staff in support of the NGEC being reauthorized with funding.

Steve Hewitt will also follow up with industry members to encourage them to reach out to congressional staff.

State members are asked to encourage their Government Affairs offices to include the NGEC in their authorization requests.

Filling the FASC 1st Vice Chair Vacancy – Tim Ziethen:

Tim returned to the issue of filling the First Vice Chair vacancy.

He called for a volunteer to step forward to accept an appointment to the position.

Brian Beeler II, NNEPRA for Maine DOT, agreed to step into the role understanding that the responsibilities and time commitment is minimal.

Steve Hewitt agreed to send the By-Laws section to Brian that describes those duties.

Tim Ziethen thanked Brian for his willingness to take on the First Vice Chair role and officially appointed him to fill the vacancy effective immediately.

Steve/Tim will inform the Executive Board that the vacancy has been filled and Brian Beeler II has been appointed as First Vice Chair of the FASC.

Other:

Steve Hewitt provided a status of the PRIIA 305-200 Recommended Practices document which was adopted by the Executive Board during the 2-23-21 NGEC Annual Meeting.

The document is being finalized with the signature cover page and all appropriate formatting by the Technical Writer – Camren Cordell. Steve es to hear from Document Control Manager Tammy Krause on where this stands in the process for completion. Once available, it will be a part of the family of NGEC documents and specifications and will be available upon request.

Ray Hessinger suggested that the document be more prominently posted and readily available rather than be subject to the usual NGEC request process.

Steve Hewitt agreed that this could be done.

Ray agreed to bring it up on the next Executive Board meeting and asked Steve Hewitt to add it to the agenda.

Adjourn:

With no other business forthcoming, Chairman Ziethen adjourned the call at about 3:38pm Eastern.

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

by phone: 1-415-655-0001

Access code: 126-073-1531

Next call – 4-28-21

Decisions - Action Items**Treasurer's Report – 3-31-21:**

Tim Ziethen provided the following Treasurer's update:

Balance and Spend Rate (through December 2020):

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

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Conveying the message – developing action plan:

Plan of Action for conveying the message and focusing on educating Congress on the need to Reauthorize the NGEC with funding in the successor to the FAST Act:

Jeff Gordon will seek clarification from FRA on the status of the current grant agreement in the event that the NGEC is not reauthorized.

Tim Ziethen will ask for clarification from Amtrak grants and talk to Ken Altman to see if there is anything further that can be done to ensure that Amtrak conveys the message that the NGEC needs to be reauthorized with funding.

Shayne Gill will continue to keep this on the radar at AASHTO as they put forth their Principles to the new Congress.

Steve Hewitt will follow up with SPRC to encourage a separate request be sent to congressional staff in support of the NGEC being reauthorized with funding.

Steve Hewitt will also follow up with industry members to encourage them to reach out to congressional staff.

State members are asked to encourage their Government Affairs offices to include the NGEC in their authorization requests.

Quarterly Grant Progress Report to FRA for quarter ending 3-31-21:

The report is due to FRA by the end of April 2021 and that timeline will be met.

Filling the position of first vice chair of the FASC:

On 3-31-21, Chairman Tim Ziethen appointed Brian Beeler II, NNEPRA for Maine DOT, to the position of First Vice Chair of the Finance and Administrative subcommittee (FASC) effective immediately. This fills the seat vacated by legacy NGEC member Brent Thompson, WSDOT who previously announced his retirement from state service.

The Executive Board will be notified that the vacancy has been filled with the appointment of Brian Beeler II.

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Next Call -4-28-21

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

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AGENDA

3-31-21

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| 1. Welcome/Open | Tim Ziethen |
| 2. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approval of the Minutes from 2-4-21 | Tim Ziethen |
| 4. Filling the FASC 1st Vice Chair Vacancy | Tim Ziethen |
| 5. Treasurer's Update | Tim Ziethen |
| a. Balance-Spend Rate | |
| 6. Conveying the message (Federal Surface Transportation Authorization) | Tim/Steve |
| a. 2021 NGEC two-page handout | |
| b. Ensuring others – SPRC, Amtrak, AASHTO – keep the NGEC on Congress' radar | |
| c. NGEC State Members working with their Government Affairs offices | |
| d. Plan of Action | |
| 7. Other Issues/questions | All |

Next Call 4-28-21