

SECTION 305 FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES

MAY 29 2019

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, Eric Curtit, Ray Hessinger, Amanda Martin, Amanda also as proxy for Arun Rao, Tim Hoeffner, Brian Beeler II, Jeff Gordon, Steve Hewitt, Strat Cavros</i>
ABSENTEES	<i>Michael Lestingi, Mike Murray, Beth Nachreiner, Jason Biggs, John Bell, Larry Salci, Shayne Gill,</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 5-1-19 call – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak:

On a motion by Brent Thompson, WSDOT, and a second by Brian Beeler II, NNEPRA for Maine DOT, the minutes from the 5-1-19 call were approved as presented.

4. Treasurer’s Update – Balance – Spend rate – Tim Ziethen:

Tim Ziethen provided the following Treasurer’s report:

Spent/accrued to date: \$401,255.35

Total Grant amount: \$1,250,000.00

Balance to date: \$848,744.65

Average monthly spend rate: \$13,375.00

The monthly rate can vary somewhat based on technical specification/document management activities during a given month and there is always a bump in spending around the annual meeting.

Still, the overall average is quite consistent at \$13, 375.00 per month. Looking at this on an ongoing basis the NGEC balance would sustain the Committee for about 5 years. With the current grant agreement ending on 9-30-20, and with no changes to workload or scope, the spend rate would put the NGEC at 3+ years left beyond the 9-30-20 grant agreement expiration date. Thus, the grant period of performance could reasonably be extended for about 3 more years beyond 9-30-20.

5. NGEC – Looking Ahead – Tim Ziethen:

a. Ensuring that the NGEC is reauthorized in the FAST Act successor

1. Confirming with Amtrak – its role in advocating for the NGEC reauthorization – following up with Ken Altman and Joe McHugh:

Tim has reached out to Ken Altman and Joe McHugh to request documentation in the Amtrak reauthorization effort that references the NGEC. While he has not received documentation yet, both Joe and Ken have given assurances that Amtrak does want to advocate to fund and reauthorize the NGEC within the required guidelines.

Tim Hoeffner, Michigan DOT, commented on the importance of getting the NGEC reauthorization request in the principle of as many organizations as possible. He noted that it is in AASHTO's paper on reauthorization and in that of the Mid America regional effort as well. Tim noted it is also expected to be in the Mid-West Intercity Passenger Rail Commission's paper – currently DRAFT.

Steve Hewitt added that the NGEC is in the recently adopted SPRC reauthorization principles and is contained in a DRAFT resolution on reauthorization prepared for the Council of State Governments-Eastern Regional Conference and will be taken up for adoption during its annual meeting at the end of July.

Tim H recommended that members follow up with other entities that they are working with to make sure it is seen in multiple places.

2. Conveying the message – distribution of the NGEC two-pager – Steve Hewitt:

Steve Hewitt reported that he has distributed 240 hard copies of the NGEC 2 pager educational document and 352 electronic copies. The hard copies have largely been distributed by representatives of transportation associations for distribution on the Hill. Some have also been used by industry members when speaking or attending various industry conferences.

This document is another way of getting the message out and is useful to many organizations to have to include with their information packets as they make their rounds on the Hill.

For copies– contact Steve with the number requested and where to send them.

b. Requesting another no-cost grant extension

1. Confirming with FRA Grants offices whether this is possible and the next steps/timing – Tim Ziethen:

Tim Ziethen reported that FRA has confirmed in an email that the NGEC Grant is eligible for additional no-cost grant agreement extension(s). There are no issues in the grant language that would preclude making such a request.

The FRA also noted that it would be amenable to such a request. The FRA suggests that the NGEC/Amtrak wait until closer to the end of the current grant agreement (likely first or second quarter 2020) to make the formal request for a no-cost extension.

Again, Tim reiterated, that it looks like there will be available funds at the end of the current period (9-30-20) to extend out three years beyond that date with no new funding.

c. Long term future funding options for the NGEC – making the case – identifying the needs

1. Status – Developing Talking Points – Eric Curtit:

Eric reported that he and Tim Ziethen have talked and Eric is refining some bullet points with the intent of developing a second NGEC handout document that describes "what we do, how we do it, why we do it and the benefits and need for national standardization of passenger rail equipment. The paper would include economic benefits to the industry – the supply change, cost efficiency and economies of scale derived from standardization etc.

Eric added "it would inform on what we bring to the table, how we are funded, and why".

The plan is to come with recommendations for FASC discussion on the next call – June 26, 2019.

6. Other Issues/Questions – All:

Adjourn:

With no further business forthcoming, Chairman Ziethen adjourned today's meeting at 3:20pm Eastern.

The next call is scheduled for June 26, 2019

The call-in number is:

888 585-9008 passcode 559-120-127#

Decisions - Action Items**Treasurer's Report – 5-29-19:**

Spent/accrued to date: \$401,255.35

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Still, the overall average is quite consistent at \$13,375.00 per month. Looking at this on an ongoing basis the NGEC balance would sustain the Committee for about 5 years. With the current grant agreement ending on 9-30-20, and with no changes to workload or scope, the spend rate would put the NGEC at 3+ years left beyond the 9-30-20 grant agreement expiration date. Thus, the grant period of performance could reasonably be extended for about 3 more years beyond 9-30-20.

NGEC Looking Ahead**Ensuring that the NGEC is reauthorized in the FAST Act successor:**

Tim has reached out to Ken Altman and Joe McHugh to request documentation in the Amtrak reauthorization effort that references the NGEC. While he has not received documentation yet, both Joe and Ken have given assurances that Amtrak does want to advocate to fund and reauthorize the NGEC within the required guidelines.

Action: Tim will follow up to try and get reference documentation for the next call 6-26-19)

Tim Hoeffner, Michigan DOT, commented on the importance of getting the NGEC reauthorization request in the principle of as many organizations as possible. He noted that it is in AASHTO's paper on reauthorization and in that of the Mid America regional effort as well. Tim noted it is also expected to be in the Mid-West Intercity Passenger Rail Commission's paper – currently DRAFT.

Steve Hewitt added that the NGEC is in the recently adopted SPRC reauthorization principles and is contained in a DRAFT resolution on reauthorization prepared for the Council of State Governments-Eastern Regional Conference and will be taken up for adoption during its annual meeting at the end of July.

Action: Tim Hoeffner recommended that FASC members follow up with other entities that they are working with to make sure it is seen in multiple places.

Determining whether another no-cost grant extension is possible and what the steps are

Tim Ziethen reported that FRA has confirmed in an email that the NGEC Grant is eligible for additional no-cost grant agreement extension(s). There are no issues in the grant language that would preclude making such a request.

The FRA also noted that it would be amenable to such a request.

Action: The FRA suggests that the NGEC/Amtrak wait until closer to the end of the current grant agreement (likely first or second quarter 2020) to make the formal request for a no-cost extension.

Looking ahead to long term future funding options – making the case – identifying the needs?

Status – Developing Talking Points – Eric Curtit:

Eric reported that he and Tim Ziethen have talked and Eric is refining some bullet points with the intent of developing a second NGEC handout document that describes “what we do, how we do it, why we do it and the benefits and need for national standardization of passenger rail equipment. The paper would include economic benefits to the industry – the supply change, cost efficiency and economies of scale derived from standardization etc.

Action: The plan is to come with recommendations for FASC discussion on the next call – June 26, 2019.

Conveying the message: Disseminating the two-page NGEC Educational Document and the NGEC “vision” statement:

Steve Hewitt reported that he has distributed 240 hard copies of the NGEC 2 pager educational document and 352 electronic copies. The hard copies have largely been distributed by representatives of transportation associations for distribution on the Hill. Some have also been used by industry members when speaking or attending various industry conferences.

This document is another way of getting the message out and is useful to many organizations to have to include with their information packets as they make their rounds on the Hill.

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Overview: Quarterly Grant Progress Report to FRA – submitted - 4-30-19:

Next report due to FRA July 31, 2019.

888 585-9008 passcode 559-120-127#
Next Call 6-26-19

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

5-29-19

3:00PM Eastern

888 585-9008 passcode 559-120-127#

AGENDA

1. Welcome/Open

Tim Ziethen

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| 2. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approval of the Minutes from 5-1-19 | Tim Ziethen |
| 4. Treasurer's Update - Balance-Spend Rate | Tim Ziethen |
| 5. NGECC – Looking Ahead | Tim Ziethen |
| a. Ensuring that the NGECC is reauthorized in the FAST Act successor | |
| 1. Confirming with Amtrak - their role in advocating for the NGECC reauthorization following up with Ken Altman and Joe McHugh | Tim Ziethen |
| 2. Conveying the message - Distribution of the NGECC two-pager | Steve Hewitt |
| b. Requesting another no-cost grant extension | |
| 1. Confirming with FRA Grants office whether this is possible and the next steps/timing | Tim Ziethen |
| c. Long term future funding options for the NGECC– making the case - identifying the needs | |
| 1. Status: Developing bullet points | Eric Curtit |
| 6. Other Issues/questions | All |

Next Call June 26, 2019

888 585-9008 passcode 559-120-127#