

# SECTION 305 FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES

JULY 20, 2022

3:00PM EASTERN

WEBEX MEETING

<b>FACILITATOR</b>	<i>Tim Ziethen, Chair of the S305 Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)</i>
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	<i>Tim Ziethen, Mike Murray for Jeff Gordon, Troy Hughes, Troy Hughes also as proxy for Ray Hessinger, Amanda Martin, Amanda Martin also as proxy for Arun Rao, Strat Cavros, Rebecca Anger, Steve Hewitt</i>
<b>ABSENTEES</b>	<i>John Oimoen, Arun Rao, Jeff Gordon, Brian Beeler II, Ray Hessinger, Larry Salci, Jason Biggs</i>

## DECISIONS MADE

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

FASC Chair Tim Ziethen opened the meeting and asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll.

### 2. Roll Call – Steve Hewitt:

After calling the roll, Steve Hewitt confirmed the presence of a quorum.

### 3. Approval of Minutes from the 2-2-22 and 4-27-22 conference calls – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak

On a motion by Troy Hughes, Missouri DOT, and a second by Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT, the minutes from the 2-2-22 and 4-27-22 FASC calls were approved as submitted.

### 4. Treasurer’s Update – Tim Ziethen:

Balance/ Spend Rate:

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.  
 Expenses Incurred through May 2022: \$971,410.38  
 Balance remaining: \$ 278,589.52  
 Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$14,285  
 Estimated Balance at the end of the Extension Period (Contingency): \$50,000

Tim pointed out that the balance remaining estimate does not include expenses related to the website refresh or any other new work.

### 5. Quarterly NGECE Grant Progress Report due to FRA on 7-29-22 – Tim Ziethen:

Tim Ziethen noted that the NGECE Quarterly Grant Report is due at the end of this month. He has already reached out to Nabina, at the Grants office for the last quarter’s report and has requested the CGI3 report or the amount reported as spent. He also noted that he has received Steve Hewitt’s quarterly summary of activities as well.

Tim will begin preparing the report and send it to Steve Hewitt for his review and edits by the end of this week (week ending 7-22-22). Steve will get his edits/comments back to Tim and once finalized, it will be sent to FRA by the due date (7-29-22).

### 6. NGECE Website Refresh – Status – Next steps – Tim/Steve/Strat:

Steve Hewitt reported that the NGECE Executive Board, on its call on 7-12-22 had decided to hold an electronic vote to consider the RFP response received from iEngineering Corporation. (This was the only response received to the RFP) The electronic vote began on 7-12-22 and ended COB on 7-19-22. (On 7-20-22, Tim Ziethen who

had been absent, cast his vote in favor)

Steve Hewitt confirmed that 11 of 13 Board members voted – all in favor. With Amtrak, FRA and the 8 of 10 states voting – all in the affirmative, the response bid/proposal from iEngineering is accepted with the NGEC Chair determining that consensus was achieved.

Steve Hewitt will send an email to Strat Cavros, AASHTO, on behalf of the NGEC Executive Board Chair, Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT and Tim Ziethen, Amtrak – the NGEC Treasurer, stating that the Executive Board has accepted its proposal (Cost and Technical).

AASHTO will then inform iEngineering and provide them with a draft agreement for their review. The intent is to have the performance period begin on August 1<sup>st</sup> with a completion date of December 31, 2022.

Strat reported that Shayne Gill will be the point of contact for the contractor.

## **7.**

### **Increasing Public Awareness – follow-ups – Steve Hewitt:**

- a. Distribution of Educational Document 2022 Steve

Steve Hewitt reported that 575 copies of the NGEC 2022 two-pager educational document have been distributed. He noted that it is close to the time where the FASC will begin to look at refreshing it for the 2023 version. This effort should begin in a couple of months.

- b. By-Laws Annual Review and proposed updates Steve

- a. Annual By-Laws Review – establish timeline – process  
Steve Hewitt reported that he and John Oimoen, IDOT (NGEC Secretary and FASC second Vice-Chair) will begin to conduct their initial annual review of the NGEC By-Laws. While the timeline is not yet finalized, the intent would be to send any proposed changes they are recommending to the FASC in advance of the September FASC call. Once the FASC has approved the updates to the By-Laws they will be sent to the Executive Board. The Board is required to have the proposed changes in their possession in writing for 30 days before a vote can be held. Steve is looking for a November timeline for Executive Board consideration.

There are two changes that will be discussed by John and Steve and any necessary language will be developed during this process.

The two items (besides a general review of the By-Laws as a whole) will include language to describe additional permissible activities that will increase the NGEC's visibility. The second item to be discussed and potentially have language developed will be to ensure that there is a second Amtrak representative named to the FASC subcommittee.

The initial thought was to change the By-Laws to add an Amtrak representative as one of the two FASC Vice Chairs so as to ensure that the work of the subcommittee can continue in the absence of the Chair.

After some discussion today, it was determined that the answer may be to not change the officer's requirements, rather to simply have Tim name an Amtrak representative who can serve as his alternate if he is not available. This is similar to the way it works with state representatives. Some of them have named individuals as their alternates in their absence.

Tim has talked to George Hull about the need to have a "back-up" for him, and Tim has an individual in mind to take on that role. He is a part of Amtrak's Mechanical Finance office and would be able to access the information that Tim currently provides to the FASC.

Steve Hewitt noted that the alternate representative would address the issue and would not require a By-Laws change. He would recommend that the alternate stay informed and attend as many FASC meetings as possible.

Tim will discuss this further with George Hull and will report back to the FASC on its next call. (8-17-22).

**7. Exploring Funding Opportunities for the NGEC – Tim Ziethen:**

- a. Status/next steps – CRISI Grant application Tim

Tim Ziethen reported that he has picked back up on his previous conversations with the Amtrak Grants team. He noted that there is to be a new format for this round of CRISI Grants, and they still do not have it.

Tim noted that they have the one from last year and could begin with that while waiting (it is not anticipated that the new format will change substantially). Tim is also getting a determination as to who from Amtrak will handle it.

In the meantime, “we could put something together based on last year’s”. Tim added that he and Nabina are going to have a meeting with the Grants office to establish the process and next steps. Once he has information to share, he will get it to Steve Hewitt to send out to the FASC members.

Tim added that he is also talking with grants to see if there is any other source of funding that could be tapped for use for the NGEC. He noted that the FRA holds back a percentage of capital grants to be used for certain improvements for the process, and potentially this may be a source to be looked into.

Steve Hewitt reported that, unfortunately, the States for passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC) request for an appropriations for the NGEC has not proven successful thus far. It is not in any of the draft bills being moved through the process. Therefore, it is important that the CRISI process move forward and that other options be explored.

Steve also noted that Paul Nissenbaum, FRA, had advised Ray Hessinger that submitting a CRISI Grant application would be helpful, even if it were not successful, because it would set a basis for FRA to potentially fund the NGEC from another source.

Steve also noted that Ray Hessinger had informed the Executive Board that during NASTO’s annual meeting, Administrator Bose was scheduled to meet with the NYSDOT Commissioner, and that Ray had included funding the NGEC as a discussion point on the Commissioner list.

In closing the discussion, Tim reiterated that he plans to meet with the grants folks and will get the current CRISI form so that process can get underway.

**8. Wisconsin DOT Representation on FASC – Arun Rao:**

Arun Rao was unavailable for this call, so Steve Hewitt reported, for those who were not aware already, that Arun is leaving Wisconsin State service to take a position with Amtrak. Arun will end his state service on 7-22-22 and begin with Amtrak on 7-25-22. Arun is a member of the NGEC Executive Board and of the FASC. No replacement for Arun for either position has yet been identified. According to Arun, Wisconsin DOT intends to remain a part of the NGEC and a representative will be named. To be continued...

**Adjourn:**

With no other business forthcoming, Tim Ziethen adjourned the call at around 3:45pm Eastern.

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

by phone: 1-415-655-0001

Access code: 126-073-1531

**Next call – 8-17-22**

**Treasurer's Report – 7-20-22:**

Balance/ Spend Rate:

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

Expenses Incurred through May 2022: \$971,410.38

Balance remaining: \$ 278,589.52

Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$14,285

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**Exploring/confirming funding options beyond 9-30-2023**

Tim Ziethen is working with Amtrak Grants to begin the process of applying for a CRISI grant.

Tim is also exploring with Amtrak Grants other potential funding options.

**Developing a plan to increase NGEN awareness as of 2-222:****Decisions/Actions – as of 7-20-22**

Steve Hewitt and John Oimoen, IDOT will discuss possible language to add to the By-Laws over the next month as a part of their initial annual review of the By-Laws.

**NGEC 2022 Two-Page Educational Document:**

Distribution of the 2022 educational two-pager continues as the primary source of raising awareness. The new website would also serve to help in raising awareness.

The process for updating the NGEN two-pager for 2023 will begin over the next few months.

The NGEN website refresh, when complete should also serve as a tool for increasing awareness.

**Quarterly Grant Progress Report to FRA:**

The FFY 2022 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter report was submitted on time – end of April 2022.

The next report (third quarter) is due to FRA by COB 7-29-22.

Tim Ziethen will provide a draft of the PDF report to Steve Hewitt for review and editing by the end of this week (7-22-22).

**NGEC Website refresh:**

The NGEN Executive Board has accepted the proposal (cost and technical) from iEngineering Corporation in response to the RFP developed by the FASC and the NGEN executive Board.

On 7-20-22, Steve Hewitt sent an email to Strat Cavros, AASHTO, on behalf of the NGEN Executive Board Chair, Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT and Tim Ziethen, Amtrak – the NGEN Treasurer, stating that the Executive Board has accepted its proposal (Cost and Technical).

AASHTO will inform iEngineering and provide them with a draft agreement for their review. The intent is to have the performance period begin on August 1<sup>st</sup> with a completion date of December 31, 2022.

On 7-20-22, Strat Cavros reported that Shayne Gill will be the AASHTO point of contact.

**Annual NGEN By-Laws Review:**

There are two items (besides a general review of the By-Laws as a whole) to be considered initially. 1. Language to describe additional permissible activities that will increase the NGEN's visibility. 2. Potential language developed to ensure that there is a second Amtrak representative named to the FASC subcommittee, at least as an alternate for the Chair.

On 7-20-22, after some discussion, it was determined that the answer to the issue of Amtrak representation may be to simply have the chair name an Amtrak representative who can serve as an alternate if the chair is not available. This is similar to the way it works with state representatives. Some of them have named individuals as their alternates in their absence. This would not necessarily require a By-Laws change.

**Wisconsin DOT representation on FASC:**

With Arun Rao's departure from Wisconsin state service, the FASC will have a vacancy. It is anticipated that Wisconsin will stay involved with the NGEN on either or both the NGEN executive Board and the FASC.

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Next Call 5-25-22

**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**

**7-20-22**

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|--|-----------------|
| 2. Welcome/Open  | Tim Ziethen     |
| 3. Roll Call   | Steve Hewitt    |
| 4. Approval – Minutes from 2-2-22 and 4-27-22            | Tim Ziethen     |
| 5. Treasurer's Update- Balance and Spend Rate            | Tim Ziethen     |
| 6. Quarterly NGEC Progress Report to FRA due 7-29-22     | Tim             |
| 7. Website Refresh Exec Board vote – Status – Next Steps | Tim/Steve/Strat |

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 8. Increasing Public Awareness – follow-ups   | Steve      |
| a. Distribution of Educational Document 2022  | Steve      |
| b. By-Laws Annual Review and proposed updates   | Steve      |
| b. Annual By-Laws Review – establish timeline - process                                 |            |
| c. Develop language to include additional permissible activities to increase visibility |            |
| d. Develop language re: Amtrak representation in support of the chair                   |            |
| 9. Exploring Funding Opportunities for the NGECC  |            |
| a. Status/next steps – CRISI Grant application  | Tim        |
| b. Appropriations Request or other possibilities  | Arun/Steve |
| 10. Wisconsin DOT representation on FASC  | Arun       |
| 11. Other Issues/questions  | All        |

**Next Call 8-17-22**