

SECTION 305 FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES

SEPT. 15, 2021

3:00PM EASTERN

WEBEX MEETING

FACILITATOR	<i>Tim Ziethen, Chair of the S305 Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)</i>
ATTENDEES	<i>Tim Ziethen, Arun Rao, Arun Rao also as proxy for Amanda Martin, Troy Hughes, Brian Beeler II, Jason Biggs, Jeff Gordon, Strat Cavros, Steve Hewitt</i>
ABSENTEES	<i>John Oimoen, Ray Hessinger, Amanda Martin, Mike Murray, Shayne Gill, Rebecca Anger, 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 8-18-21 conference calls– Tim Ziethen, Amtrak:

On a motion by Arun Rao, Wisconsin DOT and a second by Brian Beeler II, for Maine DOT, the minutes from 8-18-21 were approved as submitted.

4. Treasurer’s Update – Tim Ziethen:

Tim Ziethen provided the following Treasurer’s update:

Balance and Spend Rate

Thru July 2021:

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.
 Amount Spent through June 2021: \$812,477.83
 Balance remaining: \$ 437,522.17
 Estimated spend at current rate for the remaining grant period (through 9-30-23): \$364,246.20
 Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$14,008.24
 Estimated Balance at the end of the Extension Period (Contingency): \$73,307.97

After providing the Treasurer’s update, Tim reiterated the point that, while the NGEC does not appear to have been formally reauthorized in the pending Federal Surface Transportation Authorization legislation, the collective understanding (and intent of the Committee) is to continue to operate and spend down the current funds per the current grant agreement which runs through 9-30-2023 and to work at various options to obtain future funding beyond FFY 2023.

Discussion/next steps in looking for future funding option beyond 9-30-2023:

Tim noted that future funding for the NGEC may be covered by the FRA’s budget – maybe not as a line item, but within the confines of its budget.

Tim also noted that, in talking with Ken Altman and others at Amtrak, it is apparent that nothing prohibits the NGEC from getting funding from Amtrak through its grant process. The NGEC is listed as one of the possible recipients within the overall Amtrak grant request. He also emphasized that Amtrak is supportive of the work that the NGEC does, but it would be good to get something more concrete from Amtrak.

Steve Hewitt clarified that FRA has not confirmed that it has been provided with funding for the NGEC in its budget, but the House T&I Committee staff, when asked about the NGEC being reauthorized stated "it's covered in the budget". It would be appropriate and reasonable to get clarification from FRA on whether or not this is correct.

Steve also provided a brief background on past efforts to look at funding options for the NGEC outside of FRA or Amtrak, and after all was said and done, the NGEC determined that its activities were a federal government responsibility and should be funded through the federal government.

Tim agreed that pursuit of other options is not likely and that the best way forward is to pursue clarification from FRA and/or Amtrak.

Steve Hewitt will add this item to the next Executive Board agenda (9-21-21) as a part of the FASC report from Tim Ziethen.

Additionally, Tim raised the issue of raising the awareness of the NGEC to Congress and others with a more aggressive approach by an outward focused effort within the parameters of the NGEC's abilities. He noted that the NGEC is a "victim of its own success" and, as demonstrated in the Reauthorization effort, it goes unnoticed or is overlooked. The NGEC will need to be more aggressive in its approach.

It was agreed that this will also be a discussion item for the Executive Board call under the FASC update on 9-21-21.

5. Conveying the message Discussion: Updating the two-pager/input from FASC members - Tim/Steve:

On 9-14-21, Steve Hewitt sent out the NGEC 2021 Two-Pager to all members asking that they begin to review it and begin to think about updates that will better identify the accomplishments of the NGEC this last year when more and more entities are using the NGEC specs and when more and more of the new equipment is being placed into service. The NGEC has a great story to tell and should be doing all it can to get that story out.

Ray Hessinger was unavailable for the call today, but provided his input on updating the two-pager:

Change the date to 2022 and add in the TSSSA document to the timeline list of specifications and documents developed by the NGEC.

Mike Murray, FRA, was also unavailable, but let Steve Hewitt know that he will review the two-pager and provide input.

Tim Ziethen commented that he would like to see interoperability added to one of the results bullets. Possibly: Standardized specifications add predictability *and interoperability*.

After some discussion, it was agreed that FASC members should review the two-pager and provide comments/edits/improvements to Steve Hewitt and Tim Ziethen by 10-6-21 so that they can be compiled and discussed on the next FASC call on 10-13-21.

6. Status: NGEC By-Laws Annual Review – Steve:

Steve Hewitt reported that he did a preliminary review of the By-Laws and provided FASC Secretary, John Oimoen, with some suggested changes to review and comment on. Once John has had a chance to conduct his review, he and Steve will present any recommendations they have to the full FASC for discussion/input and possible consideration. This will likely take place on the 10-13-21. If changes are approved by the FASC, the proposed revised By-Laws will be sent to the NGEC Executive Board which will need to have them in writing in their possession for 30 days before considering adoption. This timeline takes us to either the second November call of the Board or the first one in December. The intent is to adopt any revisions by the end of the calendar year 2021 to fulfill the Annual Review task identified in the NGEC grant agreement.

Asked to elaborate on the potential changes he is suggesting, Steve noted that most have to do with consistency and, in particular, quorum requirements are an example. The Board has different requirements for what constitutes a quorum than the two standing subcommittees. Every other aspect of voting is exactly the same, and Steve believes that the quorum requirements for the Board should be worded consistent with the two subcommittees.

It was agreed that Steve Hewitt will confer with John Oimoen, and once they agree to proposed changes, he will send on to the full FASC for discussion on the 10-13-21 call.

Adjourn:

With no other business forthcoming, Chairman Ziethen adjourned the call at about 3:25pm Eastern.

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

by phone: 1-415-655-0001

Access code: 126-073-1531

Next call – 10-13-21

Decisions - Action Items**Treasurer's Report – 9-15-21:**

Balance and Spend Rate

Thru July 2021:

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On 9-15-21, it was agreed that Tim Ziethen will report to the Board on 9-21-21, the FAS thoughts on future funding and request clarification from the FRA and also Amtrak as to their ability/willingness to provide future funding beyond 9-30-2023.

Tim will also propose to the Board that a more aggressive effort should be made to raise awareness about the work of the NGECC.

Conveying the message:**2021 NGECC two-page handout:**

2021 NGECC two-page educational document:

570 of these documents have been distributed electronically.

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Quarterly Grant Progress Report to FRA:

The Quarterly Report for the period ending 7-30-21 was submitted on time and was distributed to all Board members on 8-10-21 by Steve Hewitt.

The next Quarterly Report to FRA for the period ending 9-30-21 will be due to FRA on 10-31-21.

Annual By-Laws Review:

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On 9-15-21, it was agreed that Steve Hewitt will confer with John Oimoen, and once they agree to proposed changes to the By-Laws, he will send those changes to the full FASC for discussion on the 10-13-21 call.

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Next Call -10-13-21

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

Access code: 126-073-1531

AGENDA

9-15-21

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| 1. Welcome/Open | Tim Ziethen |
| 2. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approval of the Minutes from 8-18-21 | Tim Ziethen |
| 4. Treasurer's Update | Tim Ziethen |
| a. Balance-Spend Rate | |
| b. Discussion/next steps in looking at future funding options beyond 9-30-2023 | |
| 5. Conveying the Message – Discussion: updating the two-pager/getting FASC members input | Steve/Tim |
| 6. Status: NGEC Annual By-Laws Review | Steve |
| 7. Other Issues/questions | All |

Next Call 10-13-21