



Our Vision: The NGEC will provide national leadership in standardization, acquisition, and management of passenger rail equipment.

SECTION 305 NGEC Executive Board

MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

11:30 EASTERN

CONFERENCE CALL

FACILITATOR	<i>Ray Hessinger Chair, S305 NGEC Executive Board</i>
ATTENDEES	Board Members: Ray Hessinger, Joe Paul for George Hull, Brian Beeler II, Tim Ziethen, Jeff Gordon, Arun Rao, Arun Rao also as proxy for John Oimoen, Troy Hughes, Jason Biggs for Ron Pate, Kyle Gradinger, Jon Dees for Jason Orthner, Support Staff and Colleagues: Tammy Krause, Larry Salci, Steve Hewitt, Shayne Gill, Rebecca Anger, Dave "Emeritus" Warner
ABSENTEES	Board Members: Ron Pate, Amanda Martin, Jason Orthner, Mike Jenkins, John Oimoen, Support: Michael Kraft, Strat Cavros, Patrick Centolanzi,

DECISIONS MADE

1.

Welcome – Ray Hessinger Chair, S305 NGEC Executive Board:

Chairman Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT, opened the meeting and asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll.

2. Roll Call – Steve Hewitt, NGEC Program Manager:

Steve Hewitt called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

3.

Action items Review – Steve Hewitt:

Steve Hewitt briefly reviewed the status of open action items not covered under the agenda this week and noted they will be included on the next call agenda, and the status of each is included in today's minutes (9-21-21).

2021 NGEC Backgrounder educational document:

The 2021 version of the NGEC two-page backgrounder/educational document is available electronically or in hard copy by request - contact Steve Hewitt at shewitt109@aol.com. Thus far over 575 electronic copies have been distributed.

If you would like to receive hard copies, contact Steve with the quantity and where to mail them.

A new (2022) version is being developed through the FASC with the goal of having them ready for the in person Annual Meeting in Washington, DC February 25, 2022.

Industry Participation:

Industry involvement continues to be consistent at just over 200 participants.

Recently three new members have joined the industry participants group.

Update: States and Amtrak – Charger Locomotive Experience:

In-depth updates were provided during the 2021 Annual Meeting and were included in the minutes (2-23-21).

The PowerPoint presentation was distributed and posted to the website.

Next Update: As appropriate

Technical subcommittee review of the Access Board Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding accessibility guidelines for Rail vehicles:

The intent of this effort is for states to submit their comments to the Access Board Docket on the Accessibility Requirement Guidelines Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. Amtrak has submitted its comments already and will share them with the Executive Board. Once the comments have come back from the Access Board and there is a Final Rule, the Technical subcommittee (through its technical working groups) will compare them with the NGEC specifications to ensure compliance and make any necessary changes by utilizing the NGEC DCR process.

On 8-20-20, Melissa Shurland reported to the Technical subcommittee, that the comment period ended on 7-14-20 (after having been extended to that date) and the Access Board is now processing those comments received. Melissa stated, "we are in a holding pattern to see what the comments were and what the Access Board's disposition of them will be." Melissa will keep the NGEC technical subcommittee informed as the process is completed.

As of 8-10-21 – there has been no news on the status of the Access Board's efforts.

Next Update: As appropriate

VIA Rail Equipment Procurement:

On 2-23-21 – during the NGEC Annual Meeting, VIA Rail provided a comprehensive update on its vehicle procurement.

The PowerPoint presentation was distributed and posted to the website.

VIA Rail has added a new colleague to the NGEC email list: Erika Santana - she reached out to me and asked for the NGEC Backgrounder, and she has been added to the email list.

Next Update: As appropriate

CtDOT Rail Car Procurement:

Marci Petterson, CtDOT has informed Steve Hewitt that the "cone of silence" period continues.

Next Update: As appropriate

Update: Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement:

Metro-North continues to hold their initial design review meetings.

Metro North was scheduled to do an on-site visit of the Siemens factory in Sacramento this week (the week of 9-20-21). The purpose is to review some of the systems that will remain the same in the Dual Mode Locomotive as those in the Charger.

Next Update: 10-5-21

Update: Amtrak Vehicle Procurements:

George Hull reported on 9-7-21:

On the CAF cars: The last two sleeper cars have been delivered and Amtrak is looking to get them commissioned and into service. This will be the last update on this procurement.

On the Acela 21 – work continues to progress on testing and modeling. The FRA sample car inspection was completed.

On the Intercity Passenger Rail Trainset (Amfleet) – it is progressing well. It is in the initial design review stage.

On Long Distance Locomotive – there are two on the property with one ready to ship.

Next Update: 10-5-21

NGEC in-person Annual Meeting – Washington DC – Hyatt Regency on the Hill – 2-25-22.

AASHTO has announced that it will hold its Council on Rail Transportation (CORT) meeting in Washington, DC in-person the week of 2-21-22 at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill.

As it has done in the past, the NGEN will meet at that location on the morning of February 25, 2022. More information to come.

Next Update: Late Fall 2021

4.

Approval of the Minutes from the 9-7-21 Meetings -Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT:

On a motion by Arun Rao, Wisconsin DOT, and a second by Troy Hughes, Missouri DOT, the minutes from the 9-7-21 meetings were approved as submitted.

Chairman Hessinger, at the request of Document Control Manager, Tammy Krause, agreed to move the Document Control Update earlier in the agenda to item #5.

5.

Update: Document Control Management – Tammy Krause:

Tammy Krause provided a background and status update on the Technical subcommittee's ongoing review of the Document Change Requests (DCRs) presented by Stadler Rail as a part of the DMU Specification update.

Over its last several meetings, the Technical subcommittee has been working through the Stadler DCRs chapter by chapter and considering the recommendations of the technical working groups. At this point, most of the DMU DCRs have been adjudicated by the Technical subcommittee.

On the last subcommittee call (9-16-21) the review of the carbody DCRs submitted by Stadler pertained to changing the carbody material from stainless steel to Aluminum if that is what the buyer wanted. In total, there are about 50 of the Stadler DCRs that are related to carbody material.

The concern of the Technical subcommittee is that PRIIA specifications require stainless steel. The feeling was that allowing for aluminum carbodies would entail a complete rewrite of the DMU specification.

After a great deal of discussion, without an ultimate decision, on the Technical subcommittee call on 9-16-21, it was agreed that this issue would be brought to the NGEN Executive Board with a request that it provide guidance/direction.

Larry Salci provided historical background for the Executive Board and a correction to what he had previously stated at the 9-16-21 subcommittee call.

Initially, it was thought that the Requirements Document specifically called for stainless steel carbodies. However, in the time since that subcommittee call, Mr. Salci has reviewed his notes from that period of time during which the Executive Board created the PRIIA Specification Requirements Documents. Today, (9-21-21) Mr. Salci reported that, in fact, the Requirements Documents did not call for a specific material for carbodies rather the Executive Board at the time decided to leave it up to the Technical subcommittee to determine carbody materials when developing the PRIIA vehicle specifications.

In the end, the specifications that the subcommittee developed, and the NGEN Executive Board adopted, do call for stainless steel carbodies.

The request by Stadler to change the DMU specification to allow for aluminum in place of steel if requested by a customer would result in a rewrite of the DMU specification which would entail a long process.

The recommendation from Larry Salci and also Dave "Emeritus" Warner who was the first Document Control Manager for the NGEN, was to complete the current DMU update consistent with the other PRIIA specifications and potentially look at doing a non-steel specification in the future.

A long discussion ensued, including comments from Kyle Gradinger, Caltrans, that they are in the process of entering into a procurement with Stadler, using state funds, that will include aluminum carbody material. Caltrans can see value in rewriting the PRIIA specification to include aluminum.

Kyle did point out that he was not trying to force a change in the NGEN specifications. The PRIIA specifications have served Caltrans well in its current multi state single level rail car procurement.

As Caltrans proceeds with the effort to procure equipment with Stadler he will share that specification with the states and the NGEN would have that to consider if it decides to develop a non-steel specification in the future.

Chairman Ray Hessinger cautioned the Board to ensure that there is a competitive market. He noted that precluding aluminum may impact OEMs like Stadler that are "pushing" aluminum carbody material.

Ray did, however, agree that the Technical subcommittee should wrap up its current update of the DMU specification and then potentially consider developing a specification that would provide for alternative materials (either or aluminum – stainless steel).

Further discussions ensued about the direction the Board should take going forward. Should there be a policy change to move from prescriptive specifications to performance-based specifications and what are the pros or cons for both.

It was agreed that the Board will need to prioritize what activities it wants to take up in its work plan for the coming year. Currently the updating of each of its specifications is an ongoing process with the goal to keep them consistent as well as current and useful.

The initial updating/revising of the PRIIA specifications is nearing completion. The DMU update is the last update to be done. The single level Trainset specification has been undergoing a re-write to put it into a format consistent with all other PRIIA specification. That process is close to completion but is on hold - waiting to be presented to the Technical subcommittee after the DMU update has been completed.

Decision/Actions:

The direction given to the Document Control Manager and the Technical subcommittee is to finish the DMU specification update consistent with the current policies and the other specifications and to complete the trainset specification rewrite/reformat process.

Steve Hewitt and Ray Hessinger will begin discussions of next steps and a way forward when they hold their bi-weekly one on one discussions and begin to develop plans for 2022.

Discussing potential policy changes and priorities for the year ahead will be agenda items for the upcoming Executive Board meetings to provide input to the Chair in preparation for the NGEC Annual Meeting in February 2022.

5.

Update: Finance and Administrative subcommittee (FASC) 9-21-21 – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak:

Tim Ziethen provided the following update for inclusion in the minutes of today's call (9-21-21):

Balance/ Spend Rate:

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

Amount Spent through July 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

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

Tim Ziethen reported that on the last FASC call a discussion ensued regarding NGEC securing future funding.

Tim noted that it 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 that House T&I Committee staff (Frances Bourne), when asked about the NGEC not being reauthorized in the House Federal Surface Transportation Authorization Bill, stated "it's been taken care of – its covered in the budget". Arun Rao, Wisconsin DOT, and Chair of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC) had the conversation with Frances, and he confirmed this is what she said. Arun added that he had heard nothing further.

Steve Hewitt suggested it would be appropriate and reasonable to get clarification from FRA on whether or not this is correct. Steve asked Jeff Gordon, FRA, if he would look into this with the appropriate FRA office/contact. Jeff agreed to look into it. Tim Ziethen offered to assist Jeff in any way that he could.

Steve Hewitt and Tim Ziethen provided a brief background on past efforts to look at funding options for the NGEC outside of FRA or Amtrak. Steve reported that an NGEC Task Force had looked at various options extensively and concluded that the NGEC and its activities are a federal government responsibility and should be funded through the federal government. The Executive Board at the time, formally adopted the task force recommendations.

Jeff Gordon, FRA, commented that a complete summary of the Task Force activities and its recommendations, and the ultimate Executive Board action is well documented in the NGEC Comprehensive Activities Report that Steve Hewitt has written.

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

Ray Hessinger – suggested that the NGEC explore the various grant programs that are available to see if there are grants available that may work for the NGEC. It is understood that Amtrak would likely have to be the applicant in any such grant as the NGEC is not a legal entity.

Ray also mentioned future appropriations requests.

Actions:

Tim will reach out to Ken Altman, Amtrak, for clarification.

Jeff Gordon, FRA, will reach out internally, for FRA clarification.

Explore potential grant opportunities and potential appropriations requests for funding beyond 2023.

Updating the NGEC 2021 two-pager for 2022:

The FASC has begun its review and updating of the NGEC two-pager for 2022. Some suggestions have been provided by the members.

On the 9-15-21 call, it was agreed that FASC members will 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.

Developing a strategy for raising NGEC awareness:

During the 9-15-21 FASC call, Tim Ziethen brought up the need to raise 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.

Actions:

It was agreed that the FASC should begin to look into this issue and identify where opportunities exist to raise awareness of the NGEC and its activities/accomplishments. The FASC should develop recommendations for opportunities to be proactive and bring them to the Executive Board.

6.

Update: Multi-State Car Procurement – Steve Hewitt for Caltrans:

Kyle Gradinger was unavailable to give the update. Therefore, Steve Hewitt read into the record the update provided by Caltrans on 9-16-21 to the NGEC Technical subcommittee:

Design review for the standard coach is complete. The Cab Carshell final design has been approved for production. Remaining Cab Car FDRs are in the final submittal stage and the cab car Clearance information has been submitted to Amtrak for review. The IDOT Café Car FDR is in the closeout stage with action items being addressed.

The Cab Car Collision and Corner Post Appendix F testing is scheduled for next week in Germany and the compression test report is in work.

94 cars total are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. IDOT has conditionally accepted 8 coach cars. The Caltrans cars are being prepared for Conditional Acceptance and revenue service while open items are being addressed.

**8.
Other:**

With no other business forthcoming, Chairman Ray Hessinger adjourned the meeting at 12:30pm Eastern

Next meeting – 10-5-21.

Decisions/Action Items

Update – Multi-State Rail Car Procurement as of 9-21-21:

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Update- Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Equipment as of 9-7-21:

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Amtrak Equipment Procurement Update – 9-7-21

On the CAF cars: The last two sleeper cars have been delivered and Amtrak is looking to get it commissioned and into service. **This will be the last update on this item.**

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Actions:

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NGEC Annual By-Laws Review:

The FASC has begun its review of the NGEC By-Laws and expects the process to be completed in time for Executive Board consideration by December 2021.

Technical subcommittee review of the Access Board Proposed Rulemaking regarding accessibility guidelines for Rail vehicles:

The intent of this effort is for states to submit their comments to the Access Board Docket on the Accessibility Requirement Guidelines Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. Amtrak has submitted its comments already and will share them with the Executive Board. Once the comments have come back and there is a final Rule, the Technical subcommittee (through its technical working groups) will compare them with the NGEC specifications to ensure compliance and make any necessary changes by utilizing the NGEC DCR process.

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Next Update: as appropriate

Updates: States and Amtrak – Charger Locomotive Experience:

In-depth updates were provided during the Annual Meeting and were included in the minutes.

The presentations were distributed and posted to the website.

Next Update: as appropriate

Status Update – Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement:

This procurement continues to be in the "cone of silence" phase.

Next Update – as appropriate

NGEC in-person Annual Meeting – Washington DC – Hyatt Regency on the Hill – 2-25-22.

AASHTO has announced that it will hold its Council on Rail Transportation (CORT) meeting in Washington, DC in-person the week of 2-21-22 at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill.

As it has done in the past, the NGEC will meet at that location on the morning of the 25th. More information to come.



NGEC Executive Board Meeting

10-5-21

11:30 AM – 12:00 Noon Eastern

By computer:

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

By phone:

1-415-655-0001

Access code:

126-073-1531

Agenda

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|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Welcome and Open the Meeting | Ray Hessinger |
| 2. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Action Items Status Review | Steve Hewitt |
| 4. Approval of Minutes from 9-7-21 meeting | Ray Hessinger |
| 5. Treasurer's Report/FASC update | Tim Ziethen |
| a. Balance and Spend Rate | |
| b. Exploring/confirming funding options beyond 9-30-23 | |
| c. Updating the NGECE 2021 Two-pager for 2022 | |
| d. Developing a strategy for raising NGECE awareness | |
| 6. Update: Multi-State Car Procurement | Kyle Gradinger |
| 7. Document Control Management | Tammy Krause/Larry Salci/Joe Paul |
| Discussion – DMU specification DCRs and related Requirements Document concerns/compliance Request for Executive Board Guidance/next steps | |
| 8. Other | Ray Hessinger/All |
| 9. Adjourn | Ray Hessinger |

Next call/meeting – 10-5-21