

S305 Structure and Finance Task Force

MINUTES

NOVEMBER 5,
2012

2:30PM EDT

CONFERENCE CALL

FACILITATOR	<i>Eric Curtit, Missouri DOT, Chair, Structure and Finance Task Force</i>
ATTENDEES	<i>Eric Curtit, Ron Pate, Darrell Smith, Jeff Gordon as proxy for Chad Edison, Michael Burshtin, Bill Bronte, Al Ware Support Staff: Steve Hewitt, David Ewing, Vincent Brotski, Nico Lindenau, Ryan Swick, Ashok Sundararajan,</i>
ABSENTEES	<i>Tim Hoeffner, Chad Edison, Kevin Kesler, Leo Penne, Shayne Gill, Larry Salci</i>

DISCUSSION/DECISIONS MADE

Roll Call – Steve Hewitt:

Steve Hewitt took the roll of members on the call and confirmed the presence of a quorum with 7 of 8 voting members present or represented by proxy.

Welcome – Eric Curtit:

Eric thanked all participants for taking the time to be on today's call.

Approval of the Minutes from September 24, 2012 and October 22, 2012– Eric Curtit:

On a motion by Ron Pate, Washington State DOT, and a second by Darrell Smith, Amtrak, the minutes from the September 24, 2012 and October 22, 2012 SFTF calls were approved without objection.

Status Update; Section 6/fleet deployment project – Eric Curtit:

Eric Curtit reported that it has been a "slow go" in "trying to get it (the project) going". He noted that the PB project manager, Steve Noonan had provided an outline on "what they wanted to do first". Eric stated that he and Chad Edison, FRA, had reviewed the outline and found it not to be quite what or where they wanted it to be.

Eric plans to be talking to Steve Noonan "later today" (November 5, 2012) "about moving forward in the right direction."

As an example, Eric explained that in the PB outline there was a heavy focus on talking to about 15 or 20 states about their current contracts with Amtrak for corridor service, and that this "is not exactly what we are looking for."

Eric elaborated further stating that he is asking PB (Steve Noonan) to provide an "outline of the final product and what they (PB) will do to make that happen." He added that he wants to "make sure it is clear (the outline)" and he will work with PB to get the outline finished and get it out to SFTF members. He also emphasized that he wants to make sure that PB "understands what we want" and that they "start off right."

Bill Bronte, Caltrans, provide some "encouragement" stating "the more defined it is on the front end, the better it will be on the back end."

Eric agreed and added that while it is taking longer than he anticipated to get it going, he understands that this is "seemingly new stuff" and the outline "makes everyone be on the same page, but getting it going has been difficult." Once the outline is complete, Eric is "looking for folks (SFTF members) to gut check this, especially my vice chairs" so "we do get it right".

Eric fully expects to have more progress to report on the next SFTF call on November 19, 2012.

Review of revised charge proposal and consideration for approval – Eric Curtit:

Eric Curtit explained that the review and revision of the original Executive Board charge to the SFTF in creating it, has been an iterative process. Members reviewed the original charge to see where it was still applicable and what needed to change in light of where things stand today.

A number of SFTF members weighed in with suggested changes, and as agreed on the last SFTF call, Eric took those changes and drafted a new charge to be considered by the task force on today's call. The DRAFT revised charge was distributed by Steve Hewitt to all SFTF members in advance of the call.

Eric described the revisions as presented, noting that there the charge now focuses on two primary products: The Section 6 – fleet deployment effort that is just about to get started, and defining the NGECC's Future – and the development of an implementation plan.

Eric asked for comments from the members on the call.

David Ewing suggested that under the section calling for Defining the NGECC's Vision, Mission and Goals should be revised to reflect that the Vision is being developed by the executive Board in the effort being led by Chairman Bronte. Thus, the SFTF should be reflecting the Board's Vision, rather than developing the Vision.

Bill Bronte agreed with this recommendation stating, "yes, it should be the Board that defines the Vision, Mission and Goals".

After additional discussion, it was agreed that Steve Hewitt, who will finalize and clean up the DRAFT, will revise item 2 ii 1 to read: "Define the NGECC Executive Board's Vision, Mission and Goals".

David Ewing then suggested that under that same section 2 ii 2 a new sub a. should be added to state "identify options and alternatives for consideration" and the original sub a, b, c now become, b, c, d.

This revision was agreed to, and Steve Hewitt will make the change to the "cleaned up" draft.

Steve Hewitt referred back to page one, and clarified that the heading will be revised to appropriately reflect what this document is and remove the no longer applicable opening comments. Steve also suggested that in 1. B i 1 describing the increasing relevance of passenger rail as an integral mode in addressing transportation challenges a. should be changed from "MAP21 and SRP" to "MAP21, PRIIA, and State Rail Planning (SRP)"

The members agreed with this revision as well as with the heading clean up.

At this point, Eric Curtit asked for a motion to approve the revised SFTF charge as amended.

A motion to approve was offered by Bill Bronte, Caltrans, and seconded by Ron Pate, Washington State DOT.

Steve Hewitt polled the voting members of the SFTF:

Eric Curtit, Missouri DOT – aye
Ron Pate, Washington State DOT – aye
Bill Bronte, Caltrans – aye
Al Ware, Georgia DOT – aye
Darrell Smith, Amtrak – aye
Michael Burshtin, Amtrak – aye
Jeff Gordon as proxy for Chad Edison, FRA – aye

With a quorum having been established, and all voting members present casting their vote in the affirmative, Eric Curtit determined that consensus had been achieved and the motion carried.

Steve Hewitt will make the approved changes and distribute the "cleaned up" revised charge to all SFTF members and to all Executive Board members.

Bill Bronte, NGECC Executive Board chair, stated his intent to have the Board take up consideration of the revised SFTF charge on its next call – November 13, 2012.

Defining the NGECC's Future and Developing and Implementation Plan – formerly "Son of Section 6" – Eric Curtit:

Eric Curtit explained the need to advance the effort to move beyond the Section 6 – fleet deployment effort and begin developing the so-called "Son of Section 6". In order to begin the process for moving forward with an RFP for "Son of", Eric asked if FRA would agree to develop a rough DRAFT RFP for "Son of Section 6 work".

Jeff Gordon, representing Chad Edison and FRA agreed to undertake the task requested, but asked for clarification especially in regards to timeline and level of effort.

Eric responded that the RFP should be very much a rough draft, not a lot of detail and that the timeline would be "by the next SFTF call (November 19, 2012)".

Bill Bronte noted that the "level of effort" may need to be discussed more. Bill suggested that it may be worthwhile to talk with people like David Ewing and AASHTO's Jack Basso to "get a sense of the scope of this."

Jeff Gordon asked "Is there a budget?"

Eric Curtit and others noted that it may be a bit premature for a budget. As the discussion continued, the members came to the conclusion that the first step should actually be a draft scope of work rather than an RFP at this point. Nico Lindenau, consultant to the FRA, recommended that FRA prepare a scope of work first, which includes suggestions as to what can be done internally and what may need to be done externally.

David Ewing emphasized that there "must be clear linkage between Section 6 and the Son of Section 6...it should become a clear direction for the actionable memorandum" adding for clarification, "it builds on 6 and anticipates the actionable memorandum."

Ultimately, it was agreed that the FRA would develop a DRAFT **outline of a** scope of work, as described by Nico Lindenau, looking at what can be done internally and what would need to be done externally. The SFTF members can use the scope as a starting point or basis that they can react to and build on. The DRAFT scope will be prepared in advance of the next call, and distributed through Steve Hewitt. Eric emphasized that, due to the short turnaround, the distribution of the DRAFT does not have to be more than a day or so prior to the next call.

Adjourn:

With no other business to come before the task force today, the SFTF meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30PM Eastern.

Decisions and Action Items

Finalizing and clarifying the PB tasks: Eric Curtit will get together with PB project manager, Steve Noonan to finalize an outline of the final product and what they (PB) will do to make that happen. Once finalized, the outline will be distributed to all SFTF members.

Reviewing and revising the SFTF charge: The SFTF approved the revised charge, with amendments, on today's call. The charge will be cleaned up by Steve Hewitt with the approved amendments included, and sent to all members of the SFTF and Executive Board. The Executive Board will be asked to consider the revised SFTF charge for its approval on November 13, 2012.

Defining the NGECC's Future and Develop an implementation plan: The FRA will prepare a draft **outline of the scope of work** that will include a look at what can be done internally, and what needs to be done externally. This draft scope will be distributed by Steve Hewitt within a day or so of the next SFTF call (November 19, 2012).

Keeping the Finance subcommittee in the loop on estimated costs: As costs are identified/estimated for the task of defining the NGECC's future and developing an implementation plan; the SFTF will make sure that the Finance subcommittee is informed of those estimated costs so that it can better develop the next NGECC budget. **Ongoing**

Decisions and Action Items from October 22, 2012 - Status

FRA Review of SFWG: The **draft** reference report is included as a part of the assembled history of previous NGECC future discussions.

Revising the SFTF charge: Eric Curtit will incorporate the comments received and agreed to on today's call, into one clean document for SFTF members consideration. This clean revision of the SFTF charge will be distributed through Steve Hewitt in advance of the November 5, 2012 SFTF call. All members are asked to review the new charge and be prepared to vote on approval of it on November 5, 2012. **Status: The revised charge (DRAFT) has been provided to all SFTF members and will be considered for approval on today's call.**

Finalizing and clarifying the PB tasks: Eric Curtit will develop an outline that clearly identifies the tasks to be undertaken by PB. This outline will be distributed before the November 5th call. The kickoff of the PB effort will take place either this week of next week. **Status: This item is on today's agenda**

Keeping the Finance subcommittee in the loop on estimated costs: As costs are identified/estimated for the task of defining the NGECC's future and developing an implementation plan; the SFTF will make sure that the Finance subcommittee is informed of those estimated costs so that it can better develop the next NGECC budget. **Ongoing**

It was agreed that PB will attend the SFTF bi-weekly calls beginning either November 5 or 19 depending on when the effort has kicked off.