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

## Section 305 Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee (NGEC)

**Monthly Activities Report: January and February 2023**

**Submitted By: Steven J Hewitt, Program Manager, S305 NGEC**

**Public law 110-432 required Amtrak to:**

*...establish a Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee, comprised of representatives of Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration, host freight railroad companies, passenger railroad equipment manufacturers, interested States, and as appropriate, other passenger railroad operators.*

*"The purpose of the Committee shall be to design, develop specifications for, and procure standardized next-generation corridor equipment.*

*(b) Functions – the Committee may –*

- 1) Determine the number of different types of equipment required, considering variations in operational needs and corridor infrastructure.*
- 2) Establish a pool of equipment to be used on corridor routes funded by participating states; and*
- 3) Subject agreements between Amtrak and States, utilize services provided by Amtrak to design, maintain and remanufacture equipment."*

### **Executive Board**

**Chair: Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT**

**Vice Chair: George Hull, Amtrak**

**Secretary: John Oimoen, IDOT**

**Treasurer: Tim Ziethen, Amtrak**

**The Executive Board holds bi-weekly conference calls – Tuesdays at 11:30am Eastern.**

During the months of January and February 2023, the Executive Board met three times on 1-10-23, 1-24, 23 and on 2-21-23. Additionally, the NGEC Annual meeting was held on 2-3-23.

Highlights, decisions, and action items from the months of January and February include:

Balance and Spend Rate:

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

Expenses Incurred through December 2022: \$1,084,266.74

Balance remaining: \$165,733.26.

Estimated spend at current rate for the balance of the grant: \$130,112.01.

Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$14,456.89.

Estimated Balance at the end of the Extension Period (Contingency): around \$35,621.25.

Tim commented that the balance at the end of the grant period does not yet include the \$12,000. To be paid to iEngineering for the website refresh. After paying that bill, the balance will be around \$23,000.

On 2-21-23, the FASC was assigned the task of doing a critical assessment of the NGEC's remaining funds and the anticipated costs and provide a clear picture for going forward to the end of the current grant period which ends on 9-30-23. The FASC would be meeting on 3-1-23 and will make a recommendation to the Board for consideration on 3-7-23.

- Status – Website Refresh

The website refresh is complete and in January it went live and was introduced formally to the NGEC members at the 2023 Annual Meeting. IEngineering has been paid – the invoice came in under budget at \$10,000.

- Status – CRISI Grant application:

The Amtrak – NGEC CRISI Grant Application was submitted on time on November 30, 2022.

The request is for \$2 million over 5 years with Amtrak picking up the requires 20% match (\$400,000) from non-federal funds.

The application package had many letters of support from industry, individual states, consultants, and associations such as AASHTO, RPA and SPRC.

It is anticipated that the NGEC will hear if the CRISI Grant Application has been approved in the May-June timeframe.

- 2023 NGEC two-pager:

The NGEC 2023 backgrounder/educational document was released in January and formally introduced during the Annual Meeting. To date 325 copies have been distributed (hard and soft).

- Multi-State Rail Car Procurement (provided by Caltrans) as of 2-28-23:

A detailed update presentation was provided to the NGEC during the Annual Meeting on 2-3-23. The presentation is posted in the Meetings section of the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org)

- Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Equipment as of 12-27-22:

A detailed update presentation was provided to the NGEC during the Annual Meeting on 2-3-23. The presentation is posted in the Meetings section of the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org)

- Amtrak Equipment Procurement Update – as of 12-13-22:

A detailed update presentation was provided to the NGEC during the Annual Meeting on 2-3-23. The presentation is posted in the Meetings section of the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org)

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement as of 2-28-23:

This procurement has advanced to the “cone of silence” phase.

Nothing new was reported in December 2022.

- VIA Rail Equipment Procurements:

A detailed update presentation was provided to the NGEC during the Annual Meeting on 2-3-23. The presentation is posted in the Meetings section of the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org)

- Document Control Progress Report – 2-28-23:

On 2-21-23 the NGEC Executive Board adopted the changes approved by the technical subcommittee and as revised and recommended by the Bi-Level Specification Review Panel. Revision D of 305-001 is now in the hands of the technical writer to incorporate the approved updates into the spec.

- NGEC 2023 Annual Meeting 2-3-23:

The 13<sup>th</sup> NGEC Annual Meeting was held at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill in Washington DC. The meeting was held in-person and virtually. In total there were between 115 and 120 attendees.

Ray Hessinger, NGEC Chair, reported to the Executive Board on 2-21-23 that he thought the meeting went very well. It was great to be able to re-connect with so many colleagues in-person.

Ray commented that the presentations were informative and helped in getting more members and in showing the value that the NGEC brings.

The highlight again this year was the visit by FRA Administrator Amit Bose who dropped in for the second year in a row and gave some remarks to the NGEC members. His engagement with and support of the NGEC's activities is greatly appreciated.

Administrator Bose told the NGEC members that he "dropped by" to say thank you and to "stress how important I view the ongoing work of the Committee and what you have done to date.

"The enthusiasm level is big...your work feeds into that effort...we have the money" now, but the "next five-year bill is not far away...if we can show "on time and on budget" equipment, "the next bill will recognize that."

A thank you letter was prepared and sent on 2-21-23 by Ray Hessinger on behalf of the NGEC.

Steve Hewitt concurred with Ray's comments on the meeting and confirmed that total attendance was around 115-120.

Steve also noted that "we gained three new industry members" following the meeting and that is always a positive sign – especially after 13 years. It shows that interest in the work of the NGEC remains strong and has been sustainable for a very long time.

Steve also agreed that the presentations were informative and certainly demonstrated the NGEC value and the results of the hard work that has been put in over the years by mostly volunteer participation.

Status of 2022 Priorities:

**Priority Area:** Review/Update the Bi-level specification currently in Revision C.4. With Amtrak looking at using some of the funding from the new IIJA for its western fleet, it makes sense for the NGEC to review and update the Bi-Level car specification.

**Action as of 2-28-23:** The PRIIA Bi-Level Specification 305-001 Revision D was adopted on 2-21-23 by the Executive Board. Changes approved by the Technical subcommittee were advanced to the Review Panel for the Bi-Level Specification and it provided a report with recommendations to the Executive Board on 2-17-23. On 2-21-23 those recommendations were adopted by the Board. This task is complete.

**Priority Area:** Review "emerging technologies": On the technical subcommittee call of 12-9-21 the topic of emerging technologies for propulsion was raised. Ray Hessinger believed that the technical subcommittee should conduct a scan of the industry regarding emerging technologies for propulsion and how they relate to the NGEC.

**Action as of 2-28-23:** Caltrans and Stadler Rail provided presentations during the NGEC Annual Meeting on 2-3-23 on Hydrogen Fuel Cell Multiple Unit Trains. The presentations are posted to the NGEC website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org) under its Meetings section.

**Priority Area:** Review and consider using the Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Specification organizational changes to determine if they should be adopted by the NGEC and applied across the board

to all NGEN specifications. This would be an administrative change not impacting technical content of any of the specifications and could be resolved by the Executive Board.

**Action as of 2-28-23** -These administrative changes will be included in Revision D of the Bi-Level specification as adopted on 2-21-23 and subsequently will be included in all specs as updates are made to them.

**Priority Area:** Review/update NGEN Reference and Drawings series 305-900 and 305-800.

**Action as of 12-27-22:** This item is on the DCM action plan for 2023 – no activity on reviewing the reference documents per se, but Tammy Krause, Document Control Manager will be working with Jeff Gordon to create a new reference specification to address the Volpe Center information on CEM.

### **Technical subcommittee**

**Chair: George Hull, Amtrak**

**Vice Chair: Joe Paul, Amtrak**

**The Technical subcommittee holds bi-weekly conference calls on Thursdays at 3:00pm Eastern.**

During the months of January and February 2023 the subcommittee met on 1-5, 1-19 and 2-3 (Annual Meeting):

Key decisions and action item updates from the month of December 2022, included:

- Backgrounder educational document:

The 2023 NGEN two-page educational document/handout was released in January and distributed widely during the Annual Meeting on 2-3-23. It is now available in electronic or hard copy versions. Requests should be sent to Steve Hewitt at [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com)

To date 325 copies have been distributed.

- Document Control Update as of 2-28-23:

A detailed update presentation was provided to the NGEN during the Annual Meeting on 2-3-23. The presentation is posted in the Meetings section of the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org)

The approval of the Bi-Level Specification Revision D took place in January and was sent through the NGEN Process where it ultimately was adopted on 2-3-23 by the Executive Board. All approved revisions are now being incorporated into the specification by the technical writer.

- Communications Working Group that has been formed from the Electronics on Trains Working Group. The focus is on-car communications. The sunseting of the Digital Hardware Specification and stopping work on the Software specification was approved by the Executive Board on 8-23-22. The working group has begun to meet.

Ken Martin is the team leader and keeps Document Control Manager, Tammy Krasue apposed of activities.

Multi-State Car Procurement - Caltrans (Lead State) update:

A detailed update presentation was provided to the NGEN during the Annual Meeting on 2-3-23. The presentation is posted in the Meetings section of the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org)

- Metro North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement:

A detailed update presentation was provided to the NGEN during the Annual Meeting on 2-3-23. The presentation is posted in the Meetings section of the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org)

- Amtrak Equipment Procurement Updates:

A detailed update presentation was provided to the NGEN during the Annual Meeting on 2-3-23. The presentation is posted in the Meetings section of the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org)

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement:

This procurement has advanced to the “cone of silence” phase.

- University of Nebraska study on High Speed wireless technology as of 2-28-23:

A detailed update presentation was provided to the NGEN during the Annual Meeting on 2-3-23. The presentation is posted in the Meetings section of the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org)

- Working Group on Specification Weight Issues:

Jeff Gordon is scheduled to give an update to the Technical subcommittee in March 2023.

### **The Finance and Administrative Subcommittee**

**Chair: Tim Ziethen, Amtrak**

**Vice Chair: Brian Beeler II, NNEPRA for Maine DOT**

**Second Vice Chair: John Oimoen, Illinois DOT**

**The Finance and Administrative subcommittee (FASC) will hold a conference call every four weeks on Wednesdays at 3:00pm Eastern.**

During the Month of January and February 2023, the Finance and Administrative Subcommittee met on 1-4-23 and was incorporated into the 2-3-23 NGEN Annual meeting.

Key decisions and action item updates from the months of January and February 2023 included:

- Treasurer’s Report and Finance and Administrative Sub-committee:

A detailed update presentation was provided to the NGEN during the Annual Meeting on 2-3-23. The presentation is posted in the Meetings section of the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org)

The Treasurer’s Report was accepted as presented by the NGEN Executive Board on 2-3-23.

Balance and Spend Rate through December 2022:

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

Expenses Incurred through December 2022: \$1,084,266.24

Balance remaining: \$165,733.42.

Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$14,456.89.

Estimated Balance at the end of the Grant Period: \$35,621.00.

Forecasted expense items:

Technical Review – Larry Salci – Estimated at \$21,000

Casamar – estimated in a revised Scope and Budget to be \$9,546.30.

Document Control Manager – Tammy Krause – estimate and outstanding invoices requested.

Website Refresh – iEngineering – estimated at \$12,000.00.

Miscellaneous Meeting and travel expenses – estimated around \$10,000.00.

- Exploring Funding Options

Amtrak is continuing to pursue additional funding options. It is looking into potential gap funding if a shortfall in the current grant balance occurs and is looking for potential bridge funding or pre-award funding depending on what happens with the CRISI Grant Application submitted on 11-30-22 by Amtrak for NGEC funding.

The timeframe for hearing whether the CRISI Grant Application has been accepted or not is expected to occur in May-June 2023.

- Conveying the message as of 2-28-23:

The NGEC 2023 background/educational document was released in January and distributed widely during the 2-3-23 NGEC Annual Meeting. It can be requested in hard or soft copy by contacting Steve Hewitt at [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com)

The website refresh is completed. The new website [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org) has been deployed. Reaction has been very positive. The new site is more user friendly and easy to navigate. At the Annual meeting Chairman Ray Hessinger walked through a comparison of the old site and the new one. His presentation is now posted to the website.

- Quarterly Grant Agreement Progress Report to FRA

All reports have been submitted on time. The report for the period ending 12-31-22 was submitted to FRA by the due date of 1-31-23.

The next report will be due to FRA by 4-30-23.

- By-laws changes to allow activities that will increase public awareness:

The recommended changes were adopted by the Executive Board on 12-13-22 and have been provided to AASHTO for posting to the new website.

#### **NGEC Specification Review Panel(s):**

**For each PRIIA NGEC specification a Review Panel has been established to compare the specification (as developed by the technical subcommittee) against a Requirements document previously adopted by the Executive Board. As the Review Panel completes its work, it prepares a report with recommendations. This report is submitted to the Executive Board for its consideration. Once accepted by the Board, the specification is subsequently formally adopted by the Executive Board. As part of the Document Control process, any proposed revisions to a PRIIA NGEC specification must go through the Review Panel process as well. At such times, the Review Panel, previously established for a specification, is re-convened by the Executive Board chair.**

The NGEC Bi-Level Rail Car Specification Review Panel was convened by the Chair in January and on February 14<sup>th</sup> the Panel went through the DRAFT Review Panel Report and Recommendations prepared by technical consultant Larry Salci. The Panel recommended approximately 20 additional revisions and on February 17<sup>th</sup> approved the Report and its Recommendations as revised by Mr. Salci in an electronic vote. On 2-21-23, the Report and its Recommendations was adopted by the Executive Board and the changes that will comprise 305-001 Revision D were sent to the technical writer for incorporation into the spec.