

# SECTION 305 TECH SUB COMM

MINUTES

MARCH 2, 2023 3:00PM EASTERN

CONFERENCE CALL

<b>FACILITATOR</b>	<i>Joe Paul, Vice Chair, NGEC Technical Subcommittee</i>
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	<b>Core Team Members:</b> Joe Paul for George Hull, Jeff Gordon, Sarah Hernandez for Gurleen Boparai, Ray Hessinger, Ed Engle, Jennifer Bastian, Curtis McDowell for Matthew Simmons, Troy Hughes, Art Peterson, Larry Salci, Melissa Shurland, Barley Fields, Tammy Krause, Steve Hewitt <b>Industry Members:</b> Dave Warner, Stephen Mark, Rob Magdole, Rich Stegner, Ed Golitko, Richard Curtis, Tom LaMano, Rich Bowie, Steve Ojalvo, Kevin Sudano, Josh Coran, JoAnn Hallisey, Dick Bruss, James Michel, John Stolz, Fran Nelson, Paul Jamieson, Christopher Scott,
<b>ABSENTEES</b>	<i>George Hull, Gurleen Boparai, Marci Petterson, Matthew Simmons, Tarek Omar, Mike Murray, Blair Slaughter</i>

## DISCUSSION/DECISIONS MADE

### 1.

Technical subcommittee Chair George Hull, Amtrak, was unavailable. Joe Paul, Vice Chair called the meeting to order and asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll of core team members.

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

**As always, industry participants are asked to email a notification of their attendance to Steve Hewitt at [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com).**

### 2.

**Review Action Items – Steve Hewitt, NGEC Program Manager:**

#### **2023 NGEC Backgrounder educational document:**

The 2023 NGEC two-pager is available in hard copy by request of Steve Hewitt at [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com).

To date 325 copies have been distributed.

#### **Maintaining Industry Participation List:**

There are just over two hundred industry participants.

**Any updates or changes to this list should be sent to Steve Hewitt at [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com).**

#### **Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement:**

On 1-5-23, Marci Petterson reported that they expect to receive proposals by the end of January. At that point they will enter the "cone of silence."

**Next Update: As Appropriate**

#### **University of Nebraska High Speed wireless study:**

On 2-3-23 Hamid Sharif gave a detailed presentation during the Annual Meeting.

The presentation is available on the NGEC website – [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org)

**Next Update: as appropriate.**

### 3.

**Approval of the Minutes from 1-19-23 – Joe Paul, Amtrak:**

On a motion by Jennifer Bastian, IDOT, and a second by Curtis McDowell for NCDOT, the minutes from 1-19-23 were approved as submitted.

**4.**

**Overview/Summary/Reactions – 2023 NGEC Annual meeting – Joe Paul/Steve Hewitt:**

Joe Paul reported that he thought the meeting went very well. The presentations were very good and he thought the questions asked were great and it all proved the value of the Committee and the work that it does.

Joe noted that there was also a presentation on funding for the NGEC and he is hopeful that funding is obtained (Amtrak has submitted a CRISI Grant request for the NGEC) and the work can continue beyond the current Grant period which is 9-30-23.

Steve Hewitt added that the meeting was well attended with about 115-120 attending in-person or virtually. These numbers are very strong. The last two meetings have been exceptionally well attended, and that is impressive being that the NGEC is in its 14<sup>th</sup> year. Steve also noted that “we gained three new industry members” following the meeting and that is always a positive sign – especially after so many years. It shows that interest in the work of the NGEC remains strong and has been sustainable for a very long time. The presentations were informative and helped in getting new members and in showing the value that the NGEC brings.

The highlight 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 for the NGEC’s activities is appreciated and is of critical importance to the members.

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 signed and sent on 2-21-23 by Ray Hessinger, Chair of the NGEC.

**5.**

**Update: 3-2-23 - Multi-State Rail Car Procurement – Sarah Hernandez for Gurleen Boparai, Caltrans:**

*The remaining Cab Car FDR submittals are in the final closure stage and the Cab Car dynamic framing representative approach has been submitted to FRA for review, with comments from FRA received. IDOT Café Car system level FDR reviews are nearly closed.*

*The Cab Car Collision and Corner Post Appendix F test reports are approved. The Cab Car emergency egress demo occurred on October 25 with Amtrak and FRA in attendance. The Car Complete FAI for Cab Car is tentatively scheduled for June or July.*

*125 cars are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. IDOT coaches are currently in revenue service and Caltrans is planning revenue start first half of 2023 once all necessary agreements are in place.*

**6.**

**Update – 3-2-23 - Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement – Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT:**

Siemens has started production on the first Dual Mode Locomotive. There are still a few Final Design Review items to be resolved. First Article inspections are beginning.

**7.**

**Update – 3-2-23 – Amtrak Vehicle Procurements – Joe Paul, Amtrak:**

On the Acela – They are continuing work on the simulator with Alstoms. Work is progressing.

On the ALC 42 Charger Locomotives – They are operating on the Empire Builder and the City of New Orleans and should begin operating on the Coast Starlight on Monday or Tuesday of next week.

Several Locomotives are in Wilmington for Commissioning with four ready to be shipped to Wilmington once space opens.

Overall, things are going well and Amtrak is rolling them out as they get the units.

On the GP38 yard Locomotives – they have fallen a bit behind due to quality issues. They are being resolved and it is

anticipated that the first two will be ready to work in the yard in the month of March.

**8.**

**Update – 3-2-23 – Working Group on Vehicle Weight Issues – Jeff Gordon, FRA:**

There was no update to report today. Jeff Gordon noted that he expects to have a meeting before the next Technical subcommittee call. Steve Hewitt asked Jeff if it would be better to have his update on the agenda in four weeks (two meetings from now)? Jeff said that would be better. Steve suggested that Jeff let Steve know if he's not ready for that meeting and we will hold on putting it on the agenda.

**9.**

**Update: Document Control – Tammy Krause:**

*The only document control activity since the Annual Meeting is the continued work on the Bi-Level Specification. The proposed changes were submitted to the Executive Board. The Board sent the proposed to changes to Larry Salci to review and provide a report. The Review Panel for the Bi-Level specification met and approved the Larry Salci's report. After that the Executive Board voted to accept the report and the revised specification on Tuesday 2-21-23. The technical writer is currently working on the update.*

Steve Hewitt added that thanks should go to the Technical subcommittee members who worked on the initial review and approval of the DCRs. He also expressed appreciation for the work of Larry Salci and the Review Panel and note dthat there were about 175 changes to review.

Tammy Krause added that some of the changes were duplications and the total in the end was around 150. She too thanked Larry Salci and the Review Pnael members.

Larry Salci commented on the efforts of the Panel. Stating that they "dug through them and did their homework". The Review Panel members made 20 changes to Larry's initial report and approved the final report for submittal to the Executive Board by electronic vote.

Steve Hewitt reminded subcommittee members that the although the Review Panel's Report and Recommendations were adopted by the Executive Board, it will take some time for the technical write to complete the update to what will be Revision D. Once the update is complete Steve Hewitt will let NGEN members know and they will be available as needed by request. The requests can be submitted gthrough the website or directly to Steve Hewitt at [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com).

**10.**

**Adjourn:**

With no other business forthcoming on today's call Joe Paul adjourned the meeting at 3:23pm Eastern.

**Next meeting – 3-16-23**

**Decisions and Ongoing Action Items**

**2023 NGEN Backgrounder educational document:**

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**Update: Multi-State Railcar Procurement as of 3-2-23:**

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*125 cars are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. IDOT coaches are currently in revenue service and Caltrans is planning revenue start first half of 2023 once all necessary agreements are in place.*

**Next Update – 3-16-23****Document Control:**

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**Next Update – 3-16-23****Working Group on Weight Issues:**

As of 1-19-23, the document is nearly complete. There is some work to do on it before sending back out to the working group members.

The document is turning out a bit differently than expected. Jeff Gordon had said that he is not sure exactly how the Technical subcommittee will use it.

The group has uncovered things that need to be changed in the spec. None of these are controversial. Some are simply updates to the references and some are corrections to equations that have changed. Jeff will handle these through the DCR process that is ongoing now on the Bi-Level specification update.

On 1-19-23, Jeff Gordon reported that he hopes to meet with the working group in February – either the 20<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup>.

On 3-2-23, Jeff Gordon reported that he has not completed work that he needs to provide to the working group but expects to be ready to schedule a meeting before the next Technical subcommittee call. Steve Hewitt agreed to wait to add this item to the agenda until two calls from now which would be on 3-30-23.

**Next Update – 3-30-23****University of Nebraska High Speed wireless study:**

On 2-3-23 Hamid Sharif gave a detailed presentation during the Annual Meeting.

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**Next Update: as appropriate****Metro North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement –3-2-23:**

Siemens has started production on the first Dual Mode Locomotive. There are still a few Final Design Review items to be resolved. First Article inspections are beginning.

**Next Update - 3-30-23****Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement:**

On 1-5-23, Marci Petterson reported that they expect to receive proposals by the end of January. At that point they will enter the "cone of silence."

**Next Update - As Appropriate**

**Amtrak Equipment Procurement:**

On 3-2-23, Joe Paul provided the following update:

On the Acela – They are continuing work on the simulator with Alstoms. Work is progressing.

On the ALC 42 Charger Locomotives – They are operating on the Empire Builder and the City of New Orleans and should begin operating on the Coast Starlight on Monday or Tuesday of next week.

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On the GP38 yard Locomotives – they have fallen a bit behind due to quality issues. They are being resolved and it is anticipated that the first two will be ready to work in the yard in the month of March.

**Next Update: 3-30-23.**

**Amtrak’s NGEN CRISI Grant Application:**

As of 3-2-23:

Steve Hewitt reported that the Amtrak/NGEC CRISI Grant was submitted to the FRA before the deadline. The application has been uploaded to the FRA website. FRA will review all applications received and make determinations.

The application is for \$2 million with a period of 5 years (although a sunset date is not known – Tim is checking). Amtrak is providing the 20% match (\$400,000) using non-federal funds (fare box), with the FRA providing the remaining \$1.6 million.

The Executive Board members had a brief opportunity to review and comment on the application before it was submitted. Tim Ziethen, Amtrak, who is the NGEN Treasurer and FASC Chair reported to the subcommittee (FASC) that he feels good about the application. He believes “we” made a good case. The application is comprehensive – more than thirty-five pages with included attachments.

Steve Hewitt noted that the application received many letters of support including individual states, rail manufacturing and supply companies, individual industry members, and associations such as AASHTO, the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc. (SPRC) and the Rail Passenger Association (RPA).

Steve noted that Tim had reported that Meghan Hestand, Amtrak Grants, commented to him that the support letters received was impressive.

During the FASC call, Tim also noted that the application received strong support from within Amtrak adding that the support went “all the way to the top.”

Steve mentioned that he did not have a timeline for when FRA would announce what grants were awarded, but it would be a number of months for sure.

Steve thanked those NGEN members who submitted letters in support and stated added that letters can still be sent even though the application has been submitted.

**The anticipated timeline for hearing whether the application is approved is May-June 2023.**

**Next Meeting – 3-16-23**

**ATTACHMENTS**



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

**PRIIA Section 305 Tech Sub Committee Meeting**

**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**

**3-2-23**

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|---|-----------------|
| 1. Roll Call  | Steve Hewitt    |
| 2. Review Action Items  | Steve Hewitt    |
| 3. Approve Minutes from 1-19-23                               | Joe Paul        |
| 4. Overview/summary/reactions of the NGEC 2023 Annual Meeting | Joe/Steve       |
| 5. Update: Multi-State Rail Car Procurement                   | Sarah Hernandez |
| 6. Update: Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement       | Ray Hessinger   |
| 7. Update: Amtrak Vehicle Procurements                        | Joe Paul        |
| 8. Update: Working Group on Weights Issues                    | Jeff Gordon     |
| 9. Update: Document Control                                   | Tammy Krause    |
| 10. Other   | All             |
| 11. Adjourn   | Joe Paul        |

**Next Meeting 3-16-23**