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

SECTION 305 NGEC Executive Board

MINUTES

MAY 2 2023

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, John Oimoen, Jeff Gordon, Amanda Martin, Troy Hughes, Jon Dees for Jason Orthner, Mike Jenkins, Richard Kedzior, Jodi Lehmkuhl for Kyle Gradinger, Brian Beeler II Support Staff and Colleagues: Steve Hewitt, Larry Salci, Shayne Gill, Barley Fields, Strat Cavros, Patrick Centolanzi
ABSENTEES	Board Members: Support: Jason Orthner, Kyle Gradinger, Mike Murray, George Hull, Tim Ziethen

DECISIONS MADE

1.

Welcome – Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT, Chair, 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 provided a brief review of action/ongoing tracking items not on today’s agenda.

Industry Participation:

Industry involvement continues to be consistent at just over two hundred participants.

2023 NGEC two-pager Handout Flyer:

The 2023 version of the two-page educational flyer is now available electronically or in hard copy by request from Steve Hewitt. It is also posted on the NGEC website www.ngec.org.

To date: 331 copies have been distributed.

VIA Rail Equipment Procurement:

VIA Rail gave a detailed presentation during the 2023 NGEC Annual Meeting. The presentation is available on the NGEC website or by request from Steve Hewitt.

Next Update - 2024 – NGEC Annual Meeting or as appropriate

Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement:

As of 1-5-23 proposals were due by the end of the month (January). At that point they will enter the “cone of silence.”

Next Update – As appropriate

Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement:

On 4-18-23, Ray Hessinger reported that production on car shells one and two is progressing ahead of schedule with car shell one being ready for first FAI inspection.

Metro-North and Siemens closed the FDR on third rail current collection.

Next Update: 5-16-23

Amtrak Vehicle Procurements as of 4-18-23:

On the new Acela:

Work continues on completing qualification and acceptance. Trainset #6 is to be delivered to Amtrak property this week.

On the Charger Locomotives:

Twenty-two are available for service and six are ready to come from the factory.

There was good news on issues related to the ATC cab signal and they will be able to begin operating on additional service lines (currently on the Empire Builder, City of New Orleans, and the Coast Starlight).

On the Airo trainset:

Final Design Review (FDR) has begun.

The first car shell is complete.

Next Update: 5-16-23

Status CRISI Grant Application:

On 12-13-22, Tim Ziethen reported that the CRISI Grant for funding for the NGEC was submitted on time (early). He thanked the Board for its feedback – especially in light of the short turnaround time.

Tim has requested a count on the number of support letters received and included with the application package.

Tim added that the Amtrak grants office was impressed with the number of support letters and the enthusiasm for this application.

The grants office also noted that the application was a strong and well put together document.

The timeframe for announcing which CRISI Grant applications are approved has been pushed back from May-June to August-September 2023.

Next Update: As available

4.

Approval of the Minutes from the 4-18-23 Meeting– Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT:

On a motion by John Oimoen, IDOT, and a second by Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT, the minutes from the 4-18-23 Executive Board Meeting were approved as presented.

5.

Update: Multi-state Venture Car Procurement – Jodi Lehmkuhl for Kyle Grading, Caltrans:

Jodi Lehmkuhl, Caltrans, provided the following update for inclusion in today's minutes (5-2-23):

- *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 under review. 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 Complete FAI for Cab Car is tentatively scheduled for July, to be followed by the FRA Sample Car Inspection.*
- *128 cars are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. IDOT coaches are currently in revenue service and Caltrans is targeting revenue start in first half of 2023 once all necessary agreements are in place.*

6. Update: Document Control Management – Tammy Krause:

Current activities –Tammy Krause:

The Bi-Level Specification Revision D is OnTrack to be completed by May 26th.

I have sent the PRIIA Support Specifications to the Working Group Leaders to review with their teams. I have asked for their comments by May 31.

Steve Hewitt mentioned to Tammy, that while she was out, several other items have been discussed:

1. Following the Technical subcommittee call on 4-13-23, industry member Paul Jamieson contacted him to volunteer to give some time to perform a review of the APTA PRESS standards in relation to the PRIIA specs. Steve thanked Paul and said that he (Steve) would let Tammy know. Today, (5-2-23) Steve asked Tammy to follow up with Paul when she gets a chance.
2. On the last Technical subcommittee call (4-27-23) as well as on the previous Executive Board call (4-18-23) the issue of developing a plan to acquire specifications from entities that used the PRIIA specs as a baseline and made changes to them has been discussed.

Some next steps discussed on the subcommittee call were:

- Developing a list of entities that have used PRIIA specs and made changes:

Some of those entities are:

Amtrak, VIA Rail. All Aboard Florida, CtDOT, Metro-North/LIRR, NCDOT as well as the Mid-West states, Caltrans, WSDOT and Oregon.

- Begin with the Charger Locomotive Specification as the first – next update/revision.

It was previously agreed that the next spec update/revision will be the Charger Locomotive. This would be the first where the NGEC should gather DCRs from entities that have used the specs and made changes, and incorporate those changes, where appropriate, into an updated revision of the current specification.

- Develop an outreach plan:

The Executive Board has tasked the Technical subcommittee to begin the effort of developing a plan to reach out to the entities that have used the PRIIA specs as baseline and ask that they provide those changes to the Document Control Manager – using the NGEC DCR form.

Steve noted that this work is under the purview of Tammy Krause as Document Control Manager. It is understood that due to the limited amount of funds remaining in the current grant, the bulk of this work will take place under the next grant or funding source after the current grant has expired. However, beginning to develop a plan and a list of contacts for outreach to entities to provide DCRs on changes made to the PRIIA specs should begin now.

Steve recommended that Tammy review the minutes from the 4-27-23 technical subcommittee call and the 4-18-23 Executive Board call to help provide background. He also suggested they set some time aside to talk about these items prior to next week's subcommittee call.

7.

FASC Update and Treasurer's Report – Steve Hewitt for Tim Ziethen:

Tim Ziethen was in another meeting which ran late, Steve Hewitt provided the following update as sent to him just prior to this call:

Treasurer's Update:

Balance/Spend Rate Through March 2023

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.
Expenses Incurred through January 2023: \$1,160,400.67
Balance remaining: \$89,599.33.
Estimated spend at current rate for balance of the Grant: \$89,261.59
Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$14,876.93.
Estimated Balance at the end of the Grant Period: **\$337.74**

Pending:

Casamar/TLK: \$17,346.30

NGEC funding issues/potential interim solutions discussed on the 4-26-23 FASC Call:

Steve Hewitt and Ray Hessinger provided a brief overview of the discussions that took place on the 4-26-23 NGEC FASC call regarding efforts to provide bridge money for the NGEC while awaiting the obligation of funds if the CRISI grant application for funding the NGEC is awarded and/or as a possible option if the application is unsuccessful.

If successful, there will be around a 6-month period before the funds are made available. With CRISI announcements having been pushed back to the August-September timeframe, there will definitely be a need for bridge funding. One suggested potential option would be through Amtrak – possibly from its annual grant.

There may also be a need for gap funding if the NGEC goes over its current grant amount. Right now, it is close – with a projection of about \$337 remaining at the close of the current performance period.

Note: As this discussion was taking place (5-2-23) Steve Hewitt received an email from Tim Ziethen and read it to the Executive Board members:

I am moving forward with a request through Amtrak, for next year with George Hull subject to lots of approvals.

Jeff Gordon, FRA, provided a clarification regarding Tim's reference to "lots of approvals," stating that before Amtrak goes forward with a possible plan for funding the NGEC, it would need further approval from FRA on that plan – "what, how and how much."

Steve agreed and noted that he had captured that understanding in the FASC minutes of 4-26-23 but was glad that Jeff had clarified it for those on the call today. Steve also noted that he would be sure it was in the minutes of this meeting (5-2-23) as well. Steve added that, in his email, Tim Ziethen was likely referring to the fact that there were many layers of approval just within Amtrak that would be needed before a plan could even be presented to FRA.

There will be more to discuss on the next Executive Board call (5-16-23) and, again, on the next FASC call scheduled for 5-24-23.

Below is an excerpt from the FASC meeting DRAFT minutes held on 4-26-23 which captures the funding discussion. For a full reading of the DRAFT minutes from 4-26-23 please go to the NGEC website www.ngec.org.

Excerpt item 5. NGEC FASC meeting 4-26-23:

NGEC funding issues/potential interim solutions - Tim Ziethen:

Tim reported that internally – Amtrak and FRA are having discussions about how to handle funding going forward. With the CRISI Grant announcement timeline pushed back from a May-June (2023) time frame it is now expected to take place in the August-September (2023) time frame.

If awarded a CRISI Grant – there is always a period of close to 6 months before the funds are actually received. Therefore, there will be a period where the NGEC will need additional funds in the interim or will need to shut down.

Tim has had conversations with FRA (Mike Murray and Jeff Gordon) looking at whether Amtrak could provide that funding for a period of time including addressing any shortfall. Discussions have started internally at Amtrak and FRA

with Tim having had discussions with Amtrak Grants and as recently as today had an email exchange with Mike Murray, FRA.

Discussion revolves around the possibility of requesting bridge funding under the current Amtrak Grant from FRA. This would need approval from Amtrak senior management and go through FRA.

There was also a discussion about the need to write up a no-cost extension to serve as the vehicle for additional funds. Tim noted that this cannot be requested until 90 days before the end of the current Grant period – 6-1-23.

Tim stated that he has not yet gone to Amtrak Legal about other possible options. He is working first with the Amtrak Grants Office on the possibility of a no-cost extension – which would require a new WBS and the close-out of the current WBS. This would be the third extension.

Tim commented that "we are trying to do a lot – quickly – and also if it looks like it will land heavier – to close out this year – we will need to look to Amtrak." Tim added that all of these possibilities will need senior leadership approval in Amtrak – but noted that there has been great support for the NGEC.

Jeff Gordon, FRA, provided some clarification. He noted that in previous discussions it has been stated that the current grant funds are available until expended. Therefore, "once expended, the grant is over. I am not sure that a multi-month extension is needed."

Jeff noted that it may be possible that Amtrak fund the NGEC directly through AASHTO using funds from the Amtrak annual grant.

FRA will need to hear from Amtrak on its view, and its plan and then have them "pitch it to FRA."

Tim agreed that "presumably, the Amtrak annual grant is the best way to handle it."

Tim also noted that if there is a gap at the end - he is discussing how Amtrak could cover that.

There is also the question of whether Amtrak is thinking about how long they can fund the NGEC if there a CRISI Grant is not awarded.

Tim repeated that "no one wants to the work to stop," but "we are just looking at what the mechanics are and a way to go."

On exploring other potential funding options such as the industry, or subscription-based funding etc. Conflicts of interest become a concern. The NGEC creates challenges to those and other potential alternatives.

The timeline for beginning the shutdown remains the same as initially recommended by FASC and agreed to by the Executive Board and that is a June timeframe. By then, Tim hopes to have some clarity on options and on next steps.

Tim is continuing to reach out internally for clarification and will report back as soon as he has some answers.

The Executive Board meets next week (5-2-23) and this topic will be on the agenda. Tim will provide any additional information that he gets between now and then.

**8.
Other – all:**

With no other business forthcoming, Ray Hessinger adjourned the meeting at 11:48am Eastern thanking those who attended and noting, that, even though the agenda was sparse/short, he and Steve Hewitt, felt it was important to meet today in light of the NGEC funding situation.

Next Executive Board Meeting 5-16-23

Decisions/Action Items

Treasurer's Report – 5-2-23:

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Path Forward:

As of 5-2-23, Amtrak is looking into the possibility of providing bridge funding for the period between the end of the current Grant as well as other potential sources. If Amtrak is able to develop a plan to fund the NGEC while awaiting a CRISI Grant award or, as an option if a CRISI Grant is not awarded, it will need to present the plan and its costs to the FRA for its approval. To even get to that step, Amtrak, internally, will need approvals up through senior management.

See discussion above – agenda item 7.

2023 NGEC Backgrounder educational document:

The 2023 version of the two-page educational flyer is now available electronically or in hard copy by request from Steve Hewitt. It is also posted on the NGEC website www.ngec.org.

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Status – Multi-State Rail Car Procurement as of 5-2-23:

- *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 under review. IDOT Café Car system level FDR reviews are nearly closed.*
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- *128 cars are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. IDOT coaches are currently in revenue service and Caltrans is targeting revenue start in first half of 2023 once all necessary agreements are in place.*

Next Update – 5-16-23**Status: – Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement as of 1-5-23:**

On 1-5-23, Marci Petterson, CtDOT 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**Status - Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Equipment as of 4-18-23**

Production on car shells one and two is progressing ahead of schedule with car shell one being ready for first FAI inspection.

Metro-North and Siemens closed the FDR on third rail current collection.

Next Update – 5-16-23**Status - Amtrak Vehicle Procurement as of 4-18-23:**

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The grants office also noted that the application was a strong and well put together document.

It is now anticipated that the timeline for announcing which CRISI Grant applications are approved is August-September 2023.

Next Update: As appropriate.

Updates: States and Amtrak – Charger Locomotive and Venture Cars Experience:

Detailed Updates were provided during the 2023 Annual Meeting.

Next Update: As appropriate

Next Meeting -5-16-23

NGEC Executive Board Meeting

5-2-23

11:30 AM – 12:30 Noon Eastern

By computer:

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

By phone:

1-415-655-0001

Access code:

126-073-1531

Agenda

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 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 4-18-23 Exec Board Meeting | Ray Hessinger |
| 5. Update: Multi State Venture Car Procurement | Kyle Gradinger |
| 6. Update: Document Control Management | Tammy Krause |
| 7. FASC Update | Tim Ziethen |
| - Balance/Spend Rate/Forecast | |
| - Review of anticipated expenses and budget through 9-30-23 | |
| - Status: Internal (Amtrak) Gap Funding and Bridge funding discussions. | |
| - Next steps | |
| - Status – Submittal of Quarterly Grant Agreement Progress Report to FRA – second quarter FFY23 | |
| 8. Other | All |
| 9. Adjourn | Ray Hessinger |

Next Meeting: 5-16-23