

SECTION 305 FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES

NOV 13, 2019

3:00PM EASTERN

CONFERENCE CALL

FACILITATOR	<i>Tim Ziethen, Chair of the S305 Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)</i>
ATTENDEES	<i>Tim Ziethen, Jeff Gordon, Brent Thompson, Ray Hessinger, Eric Curtit, Amanda Martin, Strat Cavros, Steve Hewitt</i>
ABSENTEES	<i>Arun Rao, Tim Hoeffner, Brian Beeler II, Michael Lestingi, John Bell, Mike Murray, Jason Biggs, Shayne Gill, Larry Salci</i>

DECISIONS MADE

1. Welcome and Open Meeting – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak:

Subcommittee Chair, Tim Ziethen, Amtrak, opened the conference call meeting and asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll.

2. Roll Call – Steve Hewitt:

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

3.

Approval of Minutes from the 8-21 and 10-16-19 conference calls – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak:

On a motion offered by Eric Curtit, MODOT, and seconded by Brent Thompson, WSDOT, the minutes from the 8-21-19 and 10-16-19 calls were approved as submitted.

4.

Treasurer's Update – Tim Ziethen:

a. Balance-Spend Rate:

Tim Ziethen reported that the expenditures and balance remains the same as the last report:

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

Amount Spent: \$ 472,593.10

Balance remaining: \$ 777,406.90

Spend Rate per month: \$ 13,899.80

Strat Cavros, AASHTO, asked if he should be using the new Amtrak system (AREBA) in submitting the invoices. Tim responded that he will get clarification – the system is brand new – but, for now, Strat should continue submitting the invoices using the same process he has used up to now.

b. Next Steps in the process of requesting no cost extension through the NGEC Executive Board Process

Tim Ziethen noted that he had previously checked with Amtrak/FRA Grants to determine if the NGEC would be eligible for another no-cost grant agreement extension, and that it was verbally communicated that it is eligible, and that FRA would be amenable.

Steve Hewitt recommended that the FASC determine what the length of the extension should be based on the burn rate.

Tim Ziethen noted that he thought that extensions are limited to a year at a time. He did note that the balance and spend rate would make a 36-month extension a reasonable period of time.

Jeff Gordon, FRA, commented that he believes that there is no set rule that limits a grant extension to a one-year period, and that it would make sense to request a longer extension rather than go through the fairly lengthy process every 12 months if there is ample balance to support a longer timeframe.

Steve Hewitt and Eric Curtit noted that they believe the NGEC has, in the past, requested, and received grant extensions for longer than 12-months.

The question of reauthorization also arose in relation to a no cost extension and what the impact would be. Ultimately the general view was that there is no certainty to when reauthorization would be complete, and that the extension should be sought on its own track. If reauthorization occurs and there is a new grant – the current one would be closed out and the new one would begin.

After considerable discussion around the next steps, it was agreed that Jeff Gordon, FRA, will get clarification on the question of whether there is a limit on how long the extension can be and will report back to the FASC by the next call – 12-11-19

On the 12-11-19 call, if the question has been answered, the FASC will formalize a recommendation to the Executive Board to formally request a no-cost grant agreement extension for the period of time deemed to be appropriate based on FRA's response and on the current burn rate.

The intent would be for the Board to submit its request in January 2020 to allow ample time to complete the process in advance of the end of the current grant agreement performance period (9-30-20).

5.

Annual NGEC By-Laws Review – Ray Hessinger/Steve Hewitt:

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT, reported that he and Steve Hewitt have reviewed the NGEC By-Laws "with a fine-tooth comb" and could not even find typos. It is their recommendation that no revisions are required.

Tim Ziethen called for a motion to accept the recommendation for no changes and advance it to the Executive Board for its next call 11-19-19.

On a motion by Eric Curtit, MODOT, seconded by Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT – the motion to inform the Executive Board that the By-Laws Annual review has been completed by the FASC and that the recommendation is that no changes are required.

6.

Preparing for the 10th NGEC Annual Meeting – Steve Hewitt:

Steve Hewitt reported that the Annual Meeting will take place on 2-21-20 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel Capitol Hill, Washington, DC.

Per the NGEC By-Laws, a formal notice has gone out to all NGEC members, including industry participants. All have been notified of the date, location and the hotel room block link. Steve Hewitt has been working with Chairman Curtit on a DRAFT Agenda for the meeting and the draft has been set to the Executive Board for its review and comment. Once the agenda is firmed up as DRAFT – it will be sent out to all NGEC members as a placeholder subject to refinement and for use by members in gaining travel approvals.

Steve is working with AASHTO and will be provided with timelines for confirming attendees for name badges and head count.

Steve recommended that Tim Ziethen have a DRAFT FASC and Treasurer's Report presentation prepared for member review on the 1-8-20 FASC conference call.

7.

Discussion: NGEC Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Working Group - Eric Curtit:

Eric Curtit reported that the Equipment Acquisition and Ownership working group has completed the development of the 4 sections of what will be compiled into a reference document/best practices/lessons learned manual.

On the last call of the working group (10-31-19) it was agreed that the best most efficient way forward for compiling the 4 sections of the report into one document, spoken in one voice and without duplications is to utilize Camren Cordell – the NGEC's specification technical writer who is already under contract. AASHTO has confirmed that there is a remaining balance in the spec writer contract of around \$44,000. This will be more than what is anticipated to spend on this particular effort.

Tammy Krause, Document Control Manager has agreed to reach out to Camren to check on her willingness and

availability for taking on this assignment. Once we have her answer, we will be able to proceed forward.

Steve Hewitt suggested that the next step is for the FASC consider a motion to recommend to the Executive Board that it approve this action as the path forward for finalizing a penultimate draft for Board review. The intent is to have a complete DRAFT ready by the time of the NGECE Annual Meeting (2-21-20).

A motion to accept the working group's recommendation to use the NGECE's currently contracted technical writer (if available) to complete the DRAFT document was offered by Eric Curtit, MODOT, and seconded by Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT.

With a quorum having been established and no objections having been brought forward, Tim Ziethen determined that consensus has been achieved, and the motion is approved. Tim Ziethen will bring this to the Executive Board for its consideration on its next call – 11-19-19.

8.

Other Issues/Questions – All:

Adjourn:

With no further business forthcoming, Chairman Ziethen adjourned today's meeting at 3:35pm Eastern.

The next call is scheduled for December 11, 2019

The call-in number is:

888 585-9008 passcode 559-120-127#

Decisions - Action Items

Treasurer's Report – 10-16-19:

The Treasurer's report as of 10-16-19 is as follows:

Amount Spent: \$ 472,593.10
Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.
Balance remaining: \$ 777,406.90
Spend Rate per month: \$ 13,899.80

At this rate there is enough funding for several years (36 months plus). The grant period (as extended) runs through 9-30-2020. Tim reminded FASC members that FRA has given verbal approval for another no-cost extension to be requested.

Steve Hewitt suggested on the last FASC call (10-16-19) that the NGECE process for making the extension request begin now in order for the Executive Board to formalize its request in advance of the NGECE Annual Meeting – thus providing Amtrak and FRA grants offices with ample time to complete their process before the current performance period ends (9-30-20).

On 11-13-19, after some discussion, it was agreed that Jeff Gordon, FRA, will get clarification on the question of whether there is a limit on how long the extension can be and will report back to the FASC by the next call – 12-11-19

On the 12-11-19 call, if the question has been answered, the FASC will formalize a recommendation to the Executive Board to formally request a no-cost grant agreement extension for the period of time deemed to be appropriate based on FRA's response and on the current burn rate.

The intent would be for the Board to submit its request in January 2020 to allow ample time to complete the process in advance of the end of the current grant agreement performance period (9-30-20).

Conveying the message: Disseminating the two-page NGECE Educational Document and the NGECE "vision" statement:

As of 10-16 -19, Steve Hewitt reported that he has distributed 265 hard copies of the NGEC 2 pager educational document and 393 electronic copies. The hard copies have largely been distributed by representatives of transportation associations for distribution on the Hill. Some have also been used by industry members when speaking or attending various industry conferences.

This document is another way of getting the message out and is useful to many organizations to have to include with their information packets as they make their rounds on the Hill.

For copies– contact Steve with the number requested and where to send them.

The NGEC Executive Board is reviewing proposed updates to the document with the intent being to have an updated version prepared and ready for distribution at the NGEC Annual Meeting.

Overview: Quarterly Grant Progress Report to FRA:

Quarter ending September 30, 2019 - report submitted on time to FRA October 31, 2019.

Next report (quarter ending December 31, 2019) is due to FRA January 31, 2020.

Statue Update: NGEC Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Best Practices Working Group:

Developing a Reference Document

On 11-13-19, Eric Curtit reported that the Equipment Acquisition and Ownership working group has completed the development of the 4 sections of what will be compiled into a reference document/best practices/lessons learned manual.

On the last call of the working group (10-31-19) it was agreed that the best most efficient way forward for compiling the 4 sections of the report into one document, spoken in one voice and without duplications is to utilize Camren Cordell – the NGEC’s specification technical writer who is already under contract. AASHTO has confirmed that there is a remaining balance in the spec writer contract of around \$44,000. This will be more than what is anticipated to spend on this particular effort.

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NGEC Annual Meeting – 2-21-20:

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888 585-9008 passcode 559-120-127#
Next Call 12-11-19

ATTACHMENTS



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

SECTION 305 NGEC Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)

Conference call
11-13-19
3:00PM Eastern

888 585-9008 passcode 559-120-127#

AGENDA

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| 1. Welcome/Open | Tim Ziethen |
| 2. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approval of the Minutes from 8-21-19 and 10-16-19 | Tim Ziethen |
| 4. Treasurer’s Update | Tim Ziethen |
| a. Balance-Spend Rate | |
| b. Next steps in the process of requesting extension through Exec Board NGEC process | |
| 5. Annual NGEC By-Laws Review | Steve/Ray |
| 6. Preparing for the NGEC Annual Meeting | Steve Hewitt |
| 7. Discussion: NGEC Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Working Group | Eric Curtit |
| a. Status update: Developing the Reference document | |

- b. Discussion: outreach to Tech writer
- c. Next Steps

8. Other Issues/questions

All

Next Call December 11, 2019

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