

# SECTION 305 FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES      MAY 1, 2019      3:00PM EASTERN      CONFERENCE CALL

<b>FACILITATOR</b>	<i>Tim Ziethen, Chair of the S305 Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)</i>
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	<i>Tim Ziethen, Brent Thompson, Mike Murray, Eric Curtit, Eric Curtit also as proxy for Ray Hessinger, Amanda Martin, Arun Rao, Steve Hewitt,</i>
<b>ABSENTEES</b>	<i>Michael Lestingi, Ray Hessinger, Tim Hoeffner, Brian Beeler II, Jeff Gordon, Beth Nachreiner, Jason Biggs, John Bell, Larry Salci, Shayne Gill, Strat Cavros</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 4-3-19 call – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak:**

On a motion by Brent Thompson, WSDOT, and a second by Eric Curtit, MoDOT, the minutes from the 4-3-19 call were approved as presented.

**4. Treasurer’s Update – Balance – Spend rate – Tim Ziethen:**

Tim Ziethen reported that the amount spent against the current grant is \$380,685.17. This leaves a balance of \$869,314. The average monthly spend rate is \$12,000. At the current rate, at the end of the current grant period – 9-30-20, there would be about 1 ½ years of money left.

Amtrak grants office has discussed with FRA grants the possibility of a no-cost extension beyond the current grant period. Tim reported that it appears, verbally, that an extension is a possibility.

The consensus among Amtrak and FRA grants is that an extension request should be held off until the end of the current grant period gets closer – (with less time remaining on the grant). Tim will confirm with Amtrak and FRA grants the process for taking this action – what would be the typical time an extension should be requested.

Tim elaborated further that at the current spend rate of \$12,000 per month plus about \$20,000 for the NGEN Annual Meeting – the yearly spend rate is about \$164,000. At this rate, there would be about 3.7 year left beyond the 9-30-20 grant period.

**5. NGEN – Looking Ahead – Tim Ziethen:**

**a. Ensuring that the NGEN is reauthorized in the FAST Act successor**

1. Confirming with Amtrak – its role in advocating for NGEN Reauthorization – Tim Ziethen:

Tim has reached out to Ken Altman (Amtrak Government Affairs) and Joe McHugh. They are both sensitive to the need to advocate for the NGEN “in context with what is allowed and appropriate”.

Tim will follow up with Ken in the next few days but noted that the general sense within Amtrak is that the work of the NGEN is productive and positive and cost effective.

2. Conveying the message – distribution of the NGEC two-pager – Steve Hewitt:

Steve Hewitt reported that he has distributed 240 hard copies of the NGEC 2 pager educational document and 351 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. The initial printing was of 200 hard copies – all distributed. Steve has just received a second supply (250) and has already distributed 40 of those. Any member of the NGEC who will be speaking with associations, or on the Hill – if you would like copies – contact Steve with number and where to send them.

**b. Requesting another no-cost grant extension**

1. Confirming with Amtrak and FRA Grants offices whether this is possible – Tim Ziethen/Mike Murray:

Tim Ziethen reiterated, as noted above, “Yes, it is possible to do” and he will follow up to get more than verbal confirmation and to get more information on the steps that need to be taken – and “when we can or should proceed”.

**c. Long term future funding options for the NGEC – making the case – identifying the needs**

1. Status – Developing Talking Points – Tim Ziethen/Eric Curtit:

Eric Curtit and Tim Ziethen have been exchanging emails on what should be included in bullet points. Some of the highlights are burn rate, “what we do” in terms of the SOW, is there an expanded policy for requiring the use of the NGEC specs (beyond ARRA funding) when using federal funds.

Eric will try to fine tune these points and create a clearer picture that can be potentially coalesced into the surface transportation bill if it gets done.

Tim will follow up with Ken Altman and Joe McHugh to see how these points can be referenced in Amtrak’s authorization positions.

Tim also pointed out that if the NGEC is reauthorized and funding is attached based on the current spend rate – a five-year grant period beyond the 3 years that the current grant amount could cover – would be equal to about a \$900,000 request which would take the NGEC out 8 years from now. This highlights that the NGEC creates high value for little money in a most efficient way.

**6.**

**Other Issues/Questions – All:**

Steve Hewitt reminded Tim Ziethen to provide copies (to FASC members and the Executive Board) of the last quarterly progress report (period ending 3-31-19) which was completed and submitted on time to FRA (4-30-19).

Tim will provide the report to Steve Hewitt for appropriate dissemination.

**Adjourn:**

With no further business forthcoming, Chairman Ziethen adjourned today’s meeting at 3:18pm Eastern.

**The next call is scheduled for May 29, 2019**

**The call-in number is:**

**888 585-9008 passcode 559-120-127#**

**Decisions - Action Items**

**Treasurer's Report – 5-1-19:**

On 5-1-19, Tim Ziethen reported that the accrued amount (spent) from the initial \$1,250,000 Grant through Tim Ziethen reported that the amount spent against the current grant is \$380,685.17. This leaves a balance of \$869,314. The average monthly spend rate is \$12,000. At the current rate, at the end of the current grant period – 9-30-20, there would be about 1 ½ years of money left.

**NGEC Looking Ahead****Ensuring that the NGEC is reauthorized in the FAST Act successor:**

Tim has reached out to Ken Altman (Amtrak Government Affairs) and Joe McHugh. They are both sensitive to the need to advocate for the NGEC "in context with what is allowed and appropriate". The general sense within Amtrak is that the work of the NGEC is productive and positive and cost effective.

Action: Tim will follow up with Ken in the next few days.

**Determining whether another no-cost grant extension is possible and what the steps are**

Amtrak grants office has discussed with FRA grants the possibility of a no-cost extension beyond the current grant period. Tim reported that it appears, verbally, that an extension is a possibility.

The consensus among Amtrak and FRA grants is that an extension request should be held off until the end of the current grant period gets closer – (with less time remaining on the grant).

Action: Tim Ziethen will confirm with Amtrak and FRA grants the process for taking this action – what would be the typical time an extension should be requested.

**Looking ahead to long term future funding options – making the case – identifying the needs?**

Status – Developing Talking Points:

Eric Curtit and Tim Ziethen have been exchanging emails on what should be included in bullet points. Some of the highlights are burn rate, "what we do" in terms of the SOW, is there an expanded policy for requiring the use of the NGEC specs (beyond ARRA funding) when using federal funds.

Action: Eric Curtit will try to fine tune these points and create a clearer picture that can be potentially coalesced into the surface transportation bill if it gets done.

Action: Tim Ziethen will follow up with Ken Altman and Joe McHugh to see how these points can be referenced in Amtrak's authorization positions.

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

Steve Hewitt reported that he has distributed 240 hard copies of the NGEC 2 pager educational document and 351 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. The initial printing was of 200 hard copies – all distributed. Steve has just received a second supply (250) and has already distributed 40 of those. Any member of the NGEC who will be speaking with associations, or on the Hill – if you would like copies – contact Steve with number and where to send them.

**Overview: Quarterly Grant Progress Report to FRA – submitted - 4-30-19:**

Tim Ziethen reported that the Quarterly Grant Progress Report to FRA has been submitted. Tim will provide Steve Hewitt with the submittal for distribution to FASC and Executive Board members.

**Task Complete** – the Quarterly report was distributed to all FASC members and Board members following the last FASC call.

**Next report due to FRA July 31, 2019.**

**888 585-9008 passcode 559-120-127#**  
**Next Call 5-29-19**

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**  
**5-1-19**  
**3:00PM Eastern**  
**888 585-9008 passcode 559-120-127#**

**AGENDA**

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Welcome/Open   | Tim Ziethen             |
| 2. Roll Call  | Steve Hewitt            |
| 3. Approval of the Minutes from 4-3-19  | Tim Ziethen             |
| 4. Treasurer's Update - Balance-Spend Rate  | Tim Ziethen             |
| 5. NGEC – Looking Ahead   | Tim Ziethen             |
| a. Ensuring that the NGEC is reauthorized in the FAST Act successor                       |                         |
| 1. Confirming with Amtrak - their role in advocating for the NGEC reauthorization         | Tim Ziethen             |
| 2. Conveying the message - Distribution of the NGEC two-pager                             | Steve Hewitt            |
| b. Requesting another no-cost grant extension   |                         |
| 1. Confirming with Amtrak & FRA Grants office whether this is possible -                  | Tim Ziethen/Mike Murray |
| 2. Determining Next Steps   | Tim Ziethen             |
| c. Long term future funding options for the NGEC– making the case - identifying the needs |                         |
| 1. Status: Developing bullet points   | Tim Ziethen/Eric Curtit |
| 6. Other Issues/questions   | All                     |

**Next Call May 29, 2019**