

SECTION 305 FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 21,
2016

3:00PM EASTERN

CONFERENCE CALL

FACILITATOR	<i>Darrell Smith, Chair of the S305 Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)</i>
ATTENDEES	<i>Darrell Smith, Brent Thompson, Ray Hessinger, Eric Curtit, Arun Rao, Brian Beeler II, Amanda Martin, Michael Lestingi, Jeff Gordon, Shayne Gill, Strat Cavros, Steve Hewitt</i>
ABSENTEES	<i>Tim Hoeffner, John Pagano, Beth Nachreiner, Lynn Everett, Sal DeAngelo, Jason Biggs, Larry Salci, Vincent Brotski, Nico Lindenau,</i>

DECISIONS MADE

1. Welcome and Open Meeting – Darrell Smith:

Subcommittee Chair Darrell Smith, 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.

Review of Action Items – Steve Hewitt:

Legislative Outreach Task Force – developing a strategy and implementation plan to obtain future federal funds for the NGEC: Each state member and Amtrak is to work with its Government Affairs office and ask that the two pager (currently being finalized) be included in its package during Hill visits to keep the NGEC on Congress' radar even though we are not yet ready to ask for more money.

A "regular update/report card/dash board" will be developed through the NGEC Legislative Task Force with the intent that it be provided to Congress through the states and Amtrak Government Affairs Offices as a means of continuing the outreach and education on the activities of the NGEC.

The first such update will be the "two-page" educational document being finalized for Executive Board approval.

Status: On 9-20-16 the NGEC Executive Board approved the revised two page educational/outreach document. MODOT will finalize and get it to Steve Hewitt and AASHTO for printing, distribution and posting to the website.

Preparing the New Grant SOW and budget for the period beginning 10-1-16 through 9-30-19: On 9-14-16, the FASC accepted as amended, the DRAFT Scope and Budget for submittal to the Executive Board for its consideration on - 9-20-16. This action adheres to the schedule as defined on the last call.

Status: On 9-20-16 the NGEC Executive Board approved the SOW as presented, and previously approved, by the FASC. The FRA informed the Board that the format is to be revised, but the Board felt that if there were no objections to the content - scope and budget – it would approve as is in order to keep the process moving. FRA and Amtrak Grants now have the SOW and will make the format changes. The Board has only asked to see the SOW again if scope or budget has changed.

Agenda item 5

Closing out the current Grant Agreement – Final package is being prepared for submittal to FRA.

Agenda item 6

4.

Approval of Minutes from the 9-14-16 FASC conference call– Darrell Smith:

On a motion by Brent Thompson, WSDOT, and a second by Eric Curtit, MODOT, the minutes from the 9-14-16 FASC conference call meeting were approved without exception.

5.

Review status DRAFT Statement of Work/post Board meeting - Darrell Smith:

Darrell Smith reported that, as Steve Hewitt mentioned in the action items update, the SOW (as previously approved by the FASC) was accepted by the NGECE Executive Board yesterday (9-20-16). The FRA informed the Board that they are requiring a different format than what was used during the last Grant process.

The FRA referenced as an example, the format used in the AASHTO support services for the SAIPRC grant. Shayne Gill shared a copy of that SOW with the NGECE (distributed to all Board members on 9-20-16 by Steve Hewitt).

The next steps were that FRA was to set up a meeting with Darrell Smith and the Amtrak Grants team to go through the NGECE SOW to be sure they are all on the same page with regard to the scope format.

Darrell noted that the nature of the work of the SAIPRC is "significantly different" than that of the NGECE, and "raises a number of questions" for from Darrell Smith. The scope for the two organizations is much different, and the translation is different.

Darrell went on to state that "Rory Beelek, Amtrak Grants, sent an email to FRA Grants to attempt to schedule a meeting (or call) and to my knowledge nothing has been set up yet."

Michael Lestingi, FRA, commented that the two grants offices have now connected, and Michael sees that Darrell was inadvertently not copied on the email exchange – "but they have connected." Michael continued to state that FRA grants "has committed to getting redline edits and comments on the current document to Rory (Beelek, Amtrak) by COB tomorrow (9-22-16) and to schedule a phone call after Amtrak grants has had a chance to look at it."

Darrell Smith responded, "Ok this is different than what was said yesterday (on the Board call) ...we will get an edited version of the SOW with comments and questions?"

Michael Lestingi responded that the redline edits were meant to "explain the difference in substance to the grants folks and the comments are provided if there is not an obvious understanding of the reformatting...translation." Michael noted that the two grants offices have worked well together before and he believes "they should get through this in good order in short order".

Darrell Smith responded that "assuming all things stay relatively the same, we can move it forward. If there are any adjustments in the scope or budget, then we will need to bring it back to the Board for its approval."

Darrell noted that he will be sure to keep Steve Hewitt and Eric Curtit posted as the process unfolds.

Steve Hewitt reminded Darrell and FRA that it was agreed (on the 9-20-16 Board call) that there would be a status update provided to the Executive Board on its next call next week – 9-27-16.

Darrell concurred and agreed to be the lead for that discussion item.

6.

Review Status of the close out process for current grant – Darrell Smith:

Darrell reported on the status of the close out process for the current grant.

Steve Hewitt regularly (monthly) prepares NGECE progress (activities) reports – one is a monthly update of the activities of the NGECE that month, and one is a detailed running comprehensive report of all NGECE activities from the beginning of the Committee's existence in January of 2010.

Throughout the current grant, Amtrak has repackaged these reports and submitted a quarterly report to FRA. For the close out this has also been done, along with all approved expenses having been pulled together. Invoices have been closed out and a checks for those expenses should be going within a day or two. Darrell emphasized that all flat rate expenses anticipated for September such as those for consultants were approved and included in the close out invoice payment.

He went on to say that reimbursement for Amtrak staff billings for NGECE services, including Darrell's time and that of

others such as Tammy Krause's were capped through September 15th. He added "Amtrak now has no ability to charge time besides the flat rated consultants through the month of September, 2016." He continued "Ask no one to take on any additional work other than the basic conference calls, etc."

He continued by noting "we are clear with our grants office and should have an invoice (final) to FRA by the end of the month."

Darrell also noted that there will be a "close out project report due in early to mid-December." This will be something that the full FASC will work on and then take to the NGEN Executive Board for its approval.

It is a document that will include things like lessons learned, and will provide a good opportunity "to re-think the accomplishments of the NGEN and should help the Legislative Outreach Task Force (headed by Eric Curtit) in developing dashboards which are its next step beyond the 2-pager."

Darrell went on to express his appreciation and thanks to AASHTO's Strat Cavros for pulling together the last two sets of invoices (for August and for anticipated flat rates for September). Strat has been great throughout, and Darrell noted how well they have worked together.

Shayne Gill mentioned that for AASHTO "our end of charging things was the end of August."

Darrell reminded anyone on the call who may not have submitted a travel expense related to the NGEN to AASHTO, "if you held on to a travel reimbursement expense form – forget it – it is gone...there is no way to fund it."

He added that there are no funds available until whenever the start date for the new grant is determined.

Michael Lestingi, FRA, emphasized "the start date will be October 1st (2016), it (the new grant) won't be signed yet but the start date will be October 1st."

Darrell Smith pointed out that Amtrak has concerns with not having something firm and in writing to that effect. Amtrak is under a tight budget as well and it has to be made very clear when the start date is in effect.

Michael Lestingi replied that he understood and "it makes sense".

Darrell added "If there is anything that FRA can do to put in writing that October 1st is firm it would be helpful."

Michael commented that he had just reaffirmed the start date in an email to Darrell again.

Darrell reiterated "it needs to be more than email to make Amtrak comfortable."

Michael stated that he "understands the risk" to Amtrak.

Darrell reminded AASHTO and others – "don't spend one more penny than you have to."

Strat Cavros asked if there was "a placeholder to bill our time to."

Darrell stated that he will get it to Strat once he has conferred with grants.

**7.
Other Issues/questions – All:**

In closing this call, Darrell reminded all that the next key meeting in relation to the new grant is next Tuesday September 27th – the NGEN Executive Board call.

The FASC, for now, is back to its regular schedule and the next call will take place on 10-19-16. However, if the need arises, the FASC will schedule a meeting in the interim, but will stick to the usual time slot if at all possible.

**8.
Adjourn** – With no other business brought forth on today's call, Darrell Smith adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:30PM Eastern.

**Next Finance and Administrative subcommittee conference call October 19, 2016
866 209 1307 access code: 9786620#**

Decisions and Action Items

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As of today, (9-21-16) FRA grants has committed to getting redline edits and comments on the current document to Rory Beelek, Amtrak, by COB tomorrow (9-22-16) and to schedule a phone call after Amtrak grants has had a chance to look at it. Darrell Smith will be included in the call.

Darrell will keep NGEC Chair Eric Curtit and NGEC manager Steve Hewitt apprised as the process progresses.

FRA has re-affirmed that the start-up date for the new grant will be 10-1-16 – Darrell Smith has asked for a firm commitment to that effect from FRA in writing.

Closing out the current Grant Agreement – Final package is being prepared for submittal to FRA. The final invoice should be out to FRA by the end of the month (September)

A close out project report will be due by early to mid-December and will be prepared by the FASC for Executive Board review and approval.

ATTACHMENTS



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

SECTION 305 Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)

**Conference call
September 21, 2016
3:00PM Eastern
866 209 1307 pass code 9786620#**

MEETING AGENDA

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|---|---------------|
| 1. Welcome/Open | Darrell Smith |
| 2. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Action Items Review | Steve Hewitt |
| 4. Approval of the Minutes from 9-14-16 | Darrell Smith |
| 5. Review status DRAFT Statement of Work/post Board Meeting | Darrell Smith |
| 6. Review status of close out process for current grant | Darrell Smith |
| 7. Other Issues/questions | All |

**Next Call October 19, 2016
Call in # 866 209 1307 passcode 9786620#**