

SECTION 305 NGEC Executive Board Conference Call Meeting

MINUTES JUNE 25, 2013 11:30AM EASTERN CONFERENCE CALL

FACILITATOR	<i>Bill Bronte, Chair, S305 NGEC Executive Board</i>
ATTENDEES	Executive Board Members: <i>Bill Bronte, Mario Bergeron (Mario also as proxy for Dan Black), Eric Curtit (Eric as proxy also for Ron Pate), Tammy Nicholson, John Oimoen, Ray Hessinger, Allan Paul as proxy for Paul Worley, Johnson Bridgwater, Ron Adams, John Tunna as proxy for Paul Nissenbaum</i> Support: <i>Steve Hewitt, Kevin Kesler, Jeff Gordon, Nico Lindenau, Ashok Sundararajan, Sara Sarkhili, Melissa Shurland, Vincent Brotski, Dave Warner, Martin Schroeder</i>
ABSENTEES	Board Members: <i>Paul Nissenbaum, Dan Black, Kevin Lawson, Al Ware, Ron Pate, Paul Worley</i> Support: <i>Tim Hoeffner, Jason Biggs, Leo Penne, Shayne Gill, Larry Salci, Dale Engelhardt, Darrell Smith, Chad Edison, Brian Beeler II, Patrick Centolanzi, David Ewing</i>

WELCOME/ROLL CALL/ACTION ITEMS REVIEW

1.	<p>Opening – Bill Bronte-chair:</p> <p>Chairman Bronte opened this conference call meeting of the NGEC Executive Board and asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll.</p>
2.	<p>Roll Call – Steve Hewitt, Manager, S305 NGEC Support Services:</p> <p>Steve Hewitt called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.</p>
3.	<p>Action Item Review –Steve Hewitt:</p>
Open Action Items	
<p>The locomotive procurement status will remain as an agenda item to keep the Board updated as to its progress. IDOT will be responsible for providing these bi-weekly updates. Status Update: Agenda item 9.</p>	
<p>Jeff Gordon will continue to provide the AASHTO. Amtrak and FRA public affairs officers with email notifications of NGEC activities. (ongoing)</p>	
<p>The 6 person task force established during the workshop to develop proposed strategic goals met following the April 2 and April 16, 2013 Executive Board calls. The subgroup met in Washington, DC May 7th and 8th. The meetings were facilitated by Paul Cooper (the facilitator for the February 20, 2013 workshop). The task force is discussing/reviewing concepts developed during the meetings. Once a concept paper is prepared and approved by the task force it will be vetted among key stakeholders and brought to the Board. Status: The task force will met this morning (June 25) at 11:00am. An update will be provided under item # 7</p>	
<p>Strategic discussions regarding future funding for the NGEC and educational opportunities will remain a standing agenda item for Board calls. All members are asked to be on the alert for opportunities to educate congress or other key audiences on what the NGEC is, what it has accomplished and what it hopes to accomplish in the future. If there are suggestions of new strategies or opportunities members should submit them to Steve Hewitt and Bill Bronte. Members should continue to think about ways to capitalize on the strong support received by a number of regional and national organizations. Status: discussion agenda item 10</p>	
<p>Requests for additional copies of the Backgrounder should be submitted to Steve Hewitt along with the number requested and an address to send them to. Status: AASHTO is going to another printing (6th) of the</p>	

Backgrounder – about 500 more copies.

The APG will be notified that it will convene its first meeting on June 10, 2013 at noon EDT in a webinar. The purpose will be to begin a review of the draft guidelines for potential ADAAG applicability to passenger rail with the intent to have a document ready to present to the Access Board by September 15, 2013 when it will begin its update. **Status: A webinar took place on June 10, 2013 with a briefing by Melissa Shurland, Kevin Kesler and Mario Bergeron. A brief update is scheduled for agenda item 5.**

Leo Penne, AASHTO, anticipates having drafts of a four-fold educational piece and a one page "fast facts" document ready for review in "about two weeks." **Status: This remains a work in progress.**

4. Approval of the minutes from May 28, 2013 – Bill Bronte:

Bill Bronte called for a motion to approve the May 28, 2013 minutes. A correction to the minutes was made to clarify that the minutes were properly dated – May 28th, and the agenda reflected the minutes of May 28th were to be considered.

On a motion by Ron Adams, Wisconsin DOT, and a second by Allan Paul, NCDOT, the minutes (with the above noted corrections) from May 28, 2013 were approved without objection.

5. Status Update: APG Review of the Guidance Document re: ADAAG Applicability to Passenger Rail – Bill Bronte:

Bill Bronte asked Kevin Kesler, FRA, and Melissa Shurland, FRA, to provide a brief summary of the Accessibility Policy Group (APG) call held on June 10, 2013.

Kevin reported that the kickoff meeting of the APG took place "last week" (June 10th) and "it went well – those on the call were fully engaged with the task at hand." Each had received a briefing document prior to the call. On the June 10th call, Kevin, Melissa and Mario Bergeron, Amtrak, described the work of the Accessibility Working Group (AWG) and the full Technical subcommittee in developing a reference/guidance document for potential ADAAG applicability to passenger rail.

On the call it was agreed that Kevin Kesler and Melissa Shurland would identify a list of items in three categories described by Kevin as: "which ones are easy to do; which ones are pretty much impossible to do; and which ones will need more study".

The next step would be to take the list of the "easy to do" items and develop a requirements document. The Executive Board would then send the requirements document to the Technical subcommittee and its technical working groups to review for technical feasibility.

In response to a question from Mario Bergeron, Kevin Kesler clarified that the items to be submitted for consideration of feasibility would be those from the "easy to do" category.

The intent is to take advantage of a window of opportunity to provide recommendations to the Access Board when it meets in mid-September, 2013, to begin its review of accessibility for passenger rail cars.

The timeline for meeting the September deadline is:

Mid-July: Draft document (with the three categories: easy; impossible; more study) will be agreed to and then the "easy to do" items will be sent to the technical subcommittee for a feasibility assessment.

Mid-August, 2013 – The Technical subcommittee will respond on the feasibility of the items reviewed and present them to the Executive Board.

In advance of the Access Board meeting in mid-September, 2013, the Board will draft a letter to the Access Board and provide it with recommendations.

6.

Status Update: Structure and Finance Task Force (SFTF) – Eric Curtit:

Eric Curtit was not available when this item came up on today's agenda, but near the close of the call, Eric provided this brief update:

Task 1 – which Eric noted "calls for a review of best practices for deploying a fleet of equipment...and the factors needed to be addressed to get maximum use out of equipment" has been provided to the core review team of the SFTF. The contractor provided two versions of task 1 – the second one more fully developed – which delayed the timeline for review.

It is intended that the core team will complete its review and send the task 1 document along with its comments to the full SFTF for its review prior to the next SFTF call in mid-July, 2013.

It is anticipated that task 1, as revised by the contractor through feedback from the SFTF, will be sent to the full Executive Board by early August, 2013.

7.

Status Update: Working Group/Task Force re: strategic plan for the NGECE future – Bill Bronte:

Bill Bronte provided a brief update as to where things stand with the task force assigned to build on the vision statement, and begin developing a concept for the organizational structure of the NGECE moving forward.

The members of the task force are: Bill Bronte, Eric Curtit, Ray Hessinger, Paul Nissenbaum, Dave Warner, and Darrell Smith along with assistance from Steve Hewitt, NGECE Support Services Manager, and FRA consultants Nico Lindenau and Ashok Sundararajan.

Following the February 20, 2013 workshop of the full Board, a task force was named to begin expanding upon the vision and build from it a concept of what the future structure of the NGECE will be.

The task force held several calls in following full Executive Board conference calls and, in May (on the 7th and 8th) the task force held facilitated workshops to begin fleshing out a concept of what the NGECE entity may look like moving forward.

Following the May workshops, a draft white paper or concept document was prepared by Nico Lindenau and Ashok Sundararajan (FRA consultants) in an attempt to capture the concepts discussed during the workshop sessions.

The members of the task force have reviewed the draft document and some have submitted comments.

This morning, in a half hour conference call held just prior to today's Executive Board call, the task force met and discussed the white paper and the comments received thus far. It was agreed that a second draft will be developed incorporating the comments submitted, and will be sent out to the members of the task force. On July 9th the task force will hold a one hour conference call following the regular Board call. The intent is to flesh out the concept document, and come to a general agreement within the task force. Following that call, it is anticipated that the white paper will be ready for submittal to the Board and to other key stakeholders for input and reaction.

Kevin Kesler, FRA, asked if there has been any discussion of "standing up an entity in the interim to hold the intellectual property." Bill Bronte stated that he believed there had been discussions about having AASHTO assume that role. Bill will check on this with Leo Penne and/or Shayne Gill, AASHTO, and get back to the Board with the answer.

8.

Discussion: ATF review of contract approval procedures – Darrell Smith:

In the absence of Darrell Smith on today's call, this item was tabled until the next Board call.

9.

Status Update: Locomotive Procurement – John Oimoen, IDOT:

John Oimoen, Illinois DOT, provided a brief update on the status of the diesel-electric locomotive procurement. He noted that there has been "lots of progress".

A press release went out two weeks ago to the industry and the public announcing the anticipated RFP release in mid-July, 2013.

A final draft RFP is currently under review by the state partners and FRA.

Regular bi-weekly update meetings among the states and FRA have been taking place.

Although there are a few issues that still need to be resolved, things are moving well and a mid-July RFP release to the industry remains the goal.

In response to a question about how long the procurement will be "out on the street", John responded – "one month". He also noted that there is a plan to hold an August 8th workshop in downtown Chicago.

10.

Ongoing Strategic Discussion: FY2014 Appropriations – NGEC future funding – Bill Bronte:

Bill Bronte asked if there were any new items with regard to appropriations for the NGEC, and hearing none, he asked that all members stay abreast of activities or opportunities to educate members on the Hill of the accomplishments of the NGEC.

Bill also noted that AASHTO has been actively talking about the NGEC as has the S4PRC, and APTA, and, hopefully, "some good will come of that."

Bill will reach out to Shayne Gill and David Ewing to see if they have any updates that he can provide the board members with in regard to appropriations for the NGEC.

Note: Late this afternoon (June 25, 2013) Mr. Ewing provided Steve Hewitt with some information pertaining to the House THUD Committee report:

Rolling stock acquisitions.—The Committee encourages Amtrak to apply to the Department of Transportation for a Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing loan to finance its Acela cars for the Northeast Corridor. Amtrak estimates the cars to cost \$200,000,000. The Committee notes that the RRIF program was created to fund this type of investment and it is the view of the Committee that Amtrak would be eligible to receive credit assistance under RRIF.

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<http://appropriations.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hrpt-113-hr-fy2014-transhud.pdf>

The yet unnumbered bill will be considered by the full House Appropriations Committee tomorrow (June 26, 2013)

Note 2: Steve Hewitt distributed the information from Mr. Ewing to the Board members as an FYI.

11.

Adjourn:

With no further business to come before the Board today, on a motion by Eric Curtit, Missouri DOT, and a second by Ron Adams, Wisconsin DOT, today's Executive Board conference call was adjourned at approximately 12:05 pm EDT.

The next Executive Board conference call is July 9, 2013

Decisions/Action Items

The locomotive procurement status will remain as an agenda item to keep the Board updated as to its progress. **IDOT** will be responsible for providing these bi-weekly updates. Thus far, the RFP is anticipated to be released to the industry in mid-July, 2013.

Jeff Gordon will continue to provide the AASHTO, Amtrak and FRA public affairs officers with email notifications of NGEC activities. (ongoing)

A special task force was established during the February 20, 2013 Executive Board workshop to develop proposed strategic goals building on the approved NGEC Vision. Once a concept paper is prepared and approved by the task force, it will be vetted among key stakeholders and brought to the Board. A draft concept paper was discussed on a call of the task force on June 25, 2013 and will be revised to incorporate comments received. The next conference call will take place following the July 9, 2013 Executive Board call.

Steve Hewitt has sent a calendar appointment to members of the task force for a one hour call on July 9, 2013, following the full Board call.

Strategic discussions regarding future funding for the NGEC and educational opportunities will remain a standing agenda item for Board calls. All members are asked to be on the alert for opportunities to educate congress or other key audiences on what the NGEC is, what it has accomplished and what it hopes to accomplish in the future. If there are suggestions of new strategies or opportunities members should submit them to Steve Hewitt and Bill Bronte. Members should continue to think about ways to capitalize on the strong support received by a number of regional and national organizations.

Bill Bronte will contact David Ewing and Shayne Gill to see if they have more information on the status of appropriations discussions.

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The APG met on June 10th 2013 to “kickoff” a review of the draft guidelines for potential ADAAG applicability to passenger rail with the intent to have a document ready to present to the Access Board by September 15, 2013 when it will begin its update. A draft requirements document will be developed and submitted to the Technical subcommittee and its technical working groups to assess feasibility. Kevin Kesler will keep the Board apprised of progress.

Bill Bronte to check with Leo Penne and Shayne Gill (AASHTO) in regard to AASHTO holding the intellectual property in the interim as the NGEC determines its future organizational structure.

Leo Penne, AASHTO, anticipates having drafts of a four-fold educational piece and a one page “fast facts” document ready for review in “about two weeks.”

On the next Executive Board call – July 9, 2013 - Darrell Smith will report on the efforts of the Administrative Task Force to review, and possibly update, NGEC contract approval procedures.

The SFTF core team is currently reviewing task 1 of the Section 6/Fleet deployment project, with the next step being review by the full SFTF by July 15, 2013 and it is anticipated that task 1, as revised by the contractor through feedback from the SFT, will be sent to the full Executive Board by early August, 2013.

