

SECTION 305 NGEN Executive Board

MINUTES

MAY 10, 2011

11:30AM EST

CONFERENCE CALL

FACILITATOR	<i>Bill Bronte, Chair, S305 NGEN Executive Board</i>
ATTENDEES	Board Members: <i>Bill Bronte, Rod Massman, Dale Engelhardt for Mario Bergeron, Ken Uznanski for DJ Stadler, Mark Yachmetz, Tammy Nicholson, Ron Adams, Ray Hessinger, Pat Simmons, Scott Witt, Joe Kyle, Support Staff/Observers/ Guests: Shayne Gill, Steve Hewitt, Rob Edgcumbe, Kevin Kesler, Whitney Phend, Stan Hunter, Allan Paul, Leo Penne,</i>
ABSENTEES	Board Members: <i>Mario Bergeron, DJ Stadler, Kevin Lawson, Al Ware Support Staff/Observers: Paul Nissenbaum, Marvin Winston, Stephen Gardner, Drew Galloway, John Bennett, Robin McCarthy, Rich Slattery, Nancy Greene, David Ewing</i>

DECISIONS MADE

Welcome – Bill Bronte, Chair, S305 NGEN Executive Board

Bill Bronte welcomed all attendees to the call, and extended his congratulations and appreciation to the FRA for recognizing the work of the NGEN in the latest round of funding (announced on May 9, 2011). The fact that funding was provided for equipment means that now “we can get something done.” He noted that California ridership increases are double digits over last year, and continued growth will mean the need for even more equipment.

Mark Yachmetz, FRA, commented that it was great to get a “production line started.” He noted that getting a production line for equipment started was a primary focus of USDOT Secretary LaHood.

Bill Bronte congratulated all states and NGEN members for their efforts in getting the Committee to the point where “we can begin to move towards real procurements”.

Bill Bronte then called the NGEN Executive Board conference call meeting to order and asked for Steve Hewitt to call the roll.

Roll Call – Steve Hewitt, Manager, S305 NGEN Support Services:

Steve Hewitt took the roll of Board members (as well as support staff), and it was determined that there were 11 Board members and 8 support staff represented on the call.

Approval of the Minutes of the April 12, 2011 Executive Board Conference call – Bill Bronte:

On a motion by Pat Simmons, North Carolina DOT, and a second by Scott Witt, Washington State DOT, the minutes of the April 12, 2011 Executive Board conference call were approved without exception or objection.

Discussion: FY 2011 Additional Funding for the NGEN – Ken Uznanski:

On behalf of DJ Stadler, Ken Uznanski reported that it had been determined that the FY 2011 Budget provided an additional \$2 million for S305 NGEN activities. He noted that it “appears that the FRA preference is to amend the existing grant agreement to include the additional \$2 million.” He stated that the Executive Board would need to develop a Scope of Work and Budget for the new money – similar to what had been done previously. The subcommittees and Administrative Task Force would need to prepare scopes of work and budgets and present them to the Executive Board.

Ken cited a few potential items that could be included in the scopes of work such as; continuing to develop a structure for a potential entity, and next steps if an entity is created. He also suggested that it would be prudent to utilize the additional funding to “pool our efforts together for a jointly managed procurement process.”

The scope of work should be put together for the next several years, and time is of the essence as the funds need to be obligated before the end of the current federal fiscal year.

Ron Adams, Wisconsin DOT commented that a draft of the Administration’s Authorization bill had a provision in it which would sunset the 305 Committee. He asked “is that where it’s going?”

Mark Yachmetz, FRA, noted that the Administration has not yet submitted a bill. He emphasized that "nothing should be based on what is believed to be in a draft of the bill." Authorization is a long and complex process.

Mark was asked "do we prepare a budget and scope" for the new money?

Mark commented that it is less urgent to prepare a scope and budget than it may seem. "We obligate the money to Amtrak as part of its normal grant agreement" so a scope is not a pressing need at this point. It is more important to figure out, long term, where it's going, than to rush to get a scope done. "305 will be funded as a part of the larger grant agreement with Amtrak."

Bill Bronte stated that we should assume that the FRA will get the money obligated quickly, and "we can continue the efforts of the structure and funding options working group to better ascertain what the \$2 million should be used for."

Mark Yachmetz commented that "we have a number of challenges facing the Committee right now" including specification development and determining the "best approaches to filling out and acquiring equipment." He suggested that we "utilize the funds for the Committee to look at the 3rd piece to see what it looks like and see what financing options are necessary to do the Committee's work." The Committee will need options on how to "structure the flow of funds for equipment acquisition."

He suggested that this be a topic for discussion by the Executive Board "fairly soon."

Rob Edgcombe asked if "we need to draft ideas in advance or in parallel to get the new money obligated."

Mark responded "in parallel." He suggested that the Committee address the structure as "we do the other things". He stressed that "we need to show success." He stated that he would rather see the Committee "put out what is needed to get the bi-level acquisition out there", and we need to "talk through what gives us the most leverage to get a standardized fleet that gives us the best price."

The discussion then turned to where California is in developing a contract for procurement of bi-level cars. Bill Bronte noted that they have prepared a framework for language (distributed yesterday, by Steve Hewitt) and was looking for feedback from 305 Committee members.

Stan Hunter, California, commented that "with money in the bank, there are expectations to move forward – we are ready to hit the ground running and issue Requests for Information from the industry." Further, Stan stated that "we now have economies of scale with California and the mid west grants, and any bi-level procurement Amtrak may do." The interest is there, "but an RFI will make sure that there are no bumps in the road and give us a chance to get it out and up and running."

Mark Yachmetz suggested that we set the next Executive Board meeting to discuss this in depth. An expression for interest should be written broadly enough for "the use of the \$350 million from yesterday's grant announcements, to broaden the acquisition and stimulate the industry even more."

Bill Bronte suggested that an opportune time for the Board to meet to discuss these issues in depth would be in conjunction with the June 22, 2011 Technical subcommittee meeting scheduled to be held in Chicago, Illinois. This would work since many of the states will already be attending that meeting, as will FRA, and Amtrak, as well as support staff such as; AASHTO and Steve Hewitt.

It was generally agreed that it would make sense to try to arrange for a focused meeting of the Board and its support staff either on the 21st of June or on the 23rd, in Chicago. It was agreed that AASHTO would look into the logistics of getting a meeting room at the hotel where the subcommittee is meeting on the 22nd. Shayne Gill will check with Andrea Ryan in regards to logistics and get back to the Board as soon as possible so that travel plans can be made.

Ken Uznanski asked for clarification – "the existing grant modification is still in place – do we do it once or roll it all into a new one?" He noted that the current one could be done quickly.

Mark Yachmetz stated that since we are now focusing on something that is 5 weeks away (the proposed focus meeting) it would make more sense to "do the existing agreement now and work on a separate agreement later." Mark agreed to check on other grant modifications with Amtrak and "let everyone know."

It was ultimately agreed that Ken Uznanski would work with the Amtrak and FRA grants people to finalize the current modification in accordance with the scope and budget that had been approved previously by the Executive Board. (February 15, 2011)

Update: Funding and Structure Options Working Group – Rob Edgcumbe:

Rob Edgcumbe reported that the Funding and Structure Options Working Group has held a series of meetings and has established three subgroups: Structure – led by Nancy Greene; Funding – led by Rueben Vabnor; and Management – led by Larry Salci. The Group is adhering to the schedule contained in its scope of work and “is progressing as planned.”

Update: Trainsets Specification Development – Dale Engelhardt:

Dale Engelhardt reported that this specification was the “toughest one to do because of the variations in designs for trainsets”. Still, Dale reported, the subcommittee is on time and all recommendations are in and being compiled by the Amtrak team (led by Michael Burshtin). The specification is on schedule for final subcommittee review and consideration of approval on June 22, 2011.

Appointing the Trainset Specification Review Panel – Bill Bronte:

Chairman Bronte noted that it was necessary to appoint a Review Panel for the Trainset specification. He called for volunteers to serve on the panel.

It was agreed that Larry Salci, consultant, would, once again, be the consultant to the Panel and would prepare the Panel’s report and recommendations. Members of the Review Panel will be:

- Bill Bronte, California DOT (Panel Chair)
- Ron Adams, Wisconsin DOT
- Allan Paul, North Carolina DOT
- Scott Witt, Washington State DOT (Andrew Wood to provide support)
- John Tunna, FRA

Mark Yachmetz took this opportunity to clarify to the Board that the “mandate of 305 does not extend to setting Safety Standards.” This responsibility lies with FRA’s Office of Safety. The 305 Committee “should not establish safety standards or strategies in its specification” development. Asked if this had occurred, Mark responded that the first draft of the trainset specification had given the Office of Safety some “heartburn”. He noted that Kevin Kesler would get a member of the Office of Safety to talk to the Technical subcommittee.

Update: Standardization Implementation Effort – Dale Engelhardt/Rob Edgcumbe:

Rob Edgcumbe reported that the implementation phase has begun. Michael Burshtin, Amtrak, is the coordinator and is conducting a pilot process to check to see if it works moving forward. Kevin Kesler reported that they are in the process of filling out forms and getting them in to Michael.

Bill Bronte asked “where are we with getting support from the Finance subcommittee?” Rob reported that he had approached the Finance subcommittee, and that DJ Stadtler was going to provide him with the name of an individual who could assist in this effort.

Update: Document Control Management Pilot – Kevin Kesler:

Kevin Kesler reported that the Document Management Control pilot is well underway. The process is in place. A new DCR form for accepting changes has been developed and circulated. A large number (12) have already been reviewed and processed. While the focus is currently on the Bi-level specification, he anticipated “opening it up to the other specs soon”. He hopes to have all requests processed in advance of the June meeting in Chicago, with revisions to the process going forward to the Board for approval in the near future.

Update/Next Steps: Rolling Stock 101 Webinar Series – Rob Edgcumbe:

Rob Edgcumbe reported that, as agreed to on the last call of the Executive Board, a conference call was held with FRA to address concerns that had been raised. The issues/concerns have been addressed and the effort is going forward. It has been agreed that the branding of the Webinar series will not be NGEC, rather it will be through the AASHTO Rail Resource Center (ARRC). Equipment is the first module that will be addressed. Rob has prepared a draft module which is being reviewed by members of the working group, and he is waiting for feedback before circulating more broadly.

He has prepared a summary of the conference call with FRA and once Mark Yachmetz has had a chance to review the notes and agrees that it captures the key points of the call, Rob will circulate them to a larger audience. Mark stated that Rob should go ahead and get the notes out.

Discussion: Possible DMU Specification development – Bill Bronte:

Bill Bronte reported that he has received a request to have the 305 Committee do a DMU spec. Bill would like the Board's input on this.

Mark Yachmetz commented that DMUs have been discussed for a long time. He said that Amtrak and several states look at DMUs as a good approach to light density service. From the perspective of light density service, if there is no 305 DMU spec developed, then FRA is put in the bind of having to deal with it outside of 305. If the Committee develops a 305 DMU spec it will prevent FRA from having to "deviate from 305." FRA seems to think the DMU is a reasonable alternative for light density service.

Bill Bronte asked if the Board would like to go ahead and approve moving forward with a DMU specification. Rod Massman pointed out that the Board should not take a formal vote since Maryland has resigned from the Board – leaving only 10 state members on the board. The 305 By-laws call for 9 or 11 states. Rod believes that before formal votes take place the states need to resolve this vacancy.

Bill Bronte asked Steve Hewitt to arrange a states' only conference call to address this issue as soon as possible. Bill will provide Steve with a couple of dates to work with in arranging the call.

Ray Hessinger, New York State DOT, noted that NY would like to see the issue (spec development) broadened to possibly include NEC electric equipment as part of the 305 Committee efforts.

Mark Yachmetz commented that "we already have a lot to do on 305"... we should deal with Amtrak service in 305 at a later date "as we figure it all out" in regards to the future of the NGECC as an entity etc. Dealing with the NEC should be more in the future at this point.

Rob Edgcumbe suggested that a requirements document for DMUs would be the first thing to do before developing a spec. Bill Bronte said he would encourage those who have approached him with this request to move in that direction.

Mark Yachmetz further emphasized that light density in emerging intercity service helps "get us to a goal of economies of scale."

Discussion: Equipment Procurement Process – outline – Bill Bronte/Stan Hunter:

Although this topic had basically been covered earlier, Bill Bronte asked Stan Hunter to provide a brief overview of the document that had been distributed to Board members yesterday.

Stan noted that it is a straw man meant to get the process started and that he welcomes input. Bill stated that once Board members have had a chance to review the document, they should provide their comments to Stan Hunter in advance of the proposed June 21 or 23 meeting. Stan asked for volunteers to serve on a task force for developing the procurement process. Volunteers should contact Stan Hunter in advance of the June meeting. Bill Bronte volunteered to serve on the task force.

Adjourn: On a motion by NCDOT and a second by NYSDOT, this Executive Board conference call meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:45pm Eastern time.

Action Items

Steve Hewitt to arrange a states-only conference call to discuss filling the Board vacancy that has occurred due to the resignation of Caitlin Hughes Rayman on behalf of Maryland DOT. (Bill Bronte to provide Steve with a couple of dates to work with)

Rob Edgcumbe will circulate the notes/summary of the conference call that was held with FRA in regards to the Railroad 101 webinar series. Rob will also circulate the equipment module, once working group members have provided him with their feedback on the draft module.

Board members and/or support staff wishing to volunteer to be a member of the task force for developing a procurement/equipment acquisition process should contact Stan Hunter before June 21st. Comments on the procurement issues document are also due before June 21, 2011

Ken Uznanski will work with Amtrak and FRA grants people to finalize the current modification in accordance with the scope and budget that had been approved previously by the Executive Board.

Steve Hewitt will work with Shayne Gill and Andrea Ryan in regards to logistics for holding a Board meeting in Chicago on either June 21 or June 23, 2011, to focus on the issues relating to equipment procurement/acquisition.

Next conference call: May 24, 2011 11:30am-12:30pm Eastern

ATTACHMENTS



**S305 NGEC Executive Board
S305 NGEC Executive Board -Conference Call
May 10, 2011
11:30 am – 12:30pm Eastern
866 299 7945 passcode 1601544#
Agenda**

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|---|-----------------|
| 1. Welcome | Bill Bronte |
| 2. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approval: April 12, 2011 Minutes | Bill Bronte |
| 4. Discussion: FY 2011 Additional funding for NGEC | Ken Uznanski |
| 5. Update: Status of current Grant Agreement modification | Ken Uznanski |
| 6. Update: Funding & Structure Options Working Group | Rob Edgcumbe |
| 7. Update: Trainsets Specification Development | Dale Engelhardt |
| 8. Appointing the Trainset Specification Review Panel | Bill Bronte |

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| 9. Update: Standardization Implementation effort | Dale Engelhardt/Rob Edgcumbe |
| 10. Update: Document Control Management Pilot | Kevin Kesler |
| 11. Update/Next steps: Rolling Stock 101 Webinar series | Rob Edgcumbe |
| 12. Discussion: Possible DMU Specification development | Bill Bronte |
| 13. Discussion: Equipment Procurement Process – outline | Bill Bronte |
| 14. Other | All |