

SECTION 305 NGENC Executive Board

MINUTES

APRIL 1, 2014

11:30 EASTERN

CONFERENCE CALL

FACILITATOR	<i>Eric Curtit, Chair, S305 NGENC Executive Board</i>
ATTENDEES	Board Members: <i>Eric Curtit, Eric also as proxy for Ron Pate, Mario Bergeron, Ray Hessinger, Gerald Sokol, Paul Nissenbaum, LeAnna Wall, LeAnna Wall also for John Oimoen, Stan Hunter, Michael Jenkins, Brian Beeler II, Tammy Nicholson</i> Support Staff: <i>Steve Hewitt, David Ewing, Shayne Gill, Arun Rao, Larry Salci, Nico Lindenau, Sara Sarkhili, Vincent Brotski, Dave Warner, Darrell Smith, Patrick Centolanzi,</i>
ABSENTEES	Board Members: <i>Paul Worley, Craig Moody, Tim Hoeffner, Ron Pate, John Oimoen</i> Support: <i>Jason Biggs, Kerri Woehler, Allan Paul, Strat Cavros, Kevin Kesler, John Tunna, Jeff Gordon, Melissa Shurland, Dale Engelhardt, Martin Schroeder, Andy House</i>

DECISIONS MADE

1. Welcome – Eric Curtit, Chair, S305 NGENC Executive Board:

Chairman Curtit opened today's meeting and asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll.

2. Roll Call – Steve Hewitt, Manager, S305 NGENC Support Services:

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

3. Review of Action Items Status – Steve Hewitt:

At the Annual Meeting, the Executive Board accepted the Task 1 report and has determined that Tasks 2 and 3 will move to the mid-west states to develop their Section 6 plans. There will be a standing agenda item on Executive Board calls to get a progress report from the mid-west states. The effort is underway with the mid-west states meeting face to face on a monthly basis.

Agenda item # 5

Ron Pate will provide a list of the members of the 514 working group to Steve Hewitt to update the NGENC record. A DRAFT SOW for a consultant is under review, and the intent is to bring it to the Board for its consideration on the April 1, 2014 call. The 305-209 (514) effort will continue to move forward and remain as an ongoing agenda item on Board calls.

Member list is still pending.

Discussion of SOW will take place as part of the overall update on the working group activities – Agenda item #8.

Ron was unavailable for today's call – therefore no update on the working group activities was provided.

The 2 procurements – bi-level cars and the diesel-electric locomotives-will continue to be standing agenda items on the Executive Board calls. The bi-level is currently in the process of "mock up" review. The locomotive procurement is progressing well with a master agreement having been signed and a notice to proceed having been given. The kick off meeting is scheduled for April 14-15, 2014 in Sacramento, Ca.

Agenda item # 6 and 7

Steve Hewitt will send out relevant material from the previous NGENC Future working group to remind board members of "where we left off." Board members are asked to think about how best to proceed moving forward. This will be an agenda item on the April 1, 2014 conference call.

Status: Following the last call, Steve Hewitt provided all relevant material to all Board members. A discussion on next steps will take place under agenda item #9.

Eric Curtit will contact NCDOT about becoming a member of the Bi-Level Review Panel.
Status: Eric reported – “contact initiated”.

Backgrounder: **Status: The Backgrounder has been updated, as have the org charts. The updated Backgrounder is available. A distribution will be made to all Board members. New Board members have been asked for their mailing addresses – thus far only Brian Beeler has responded.**

Brian Beeler II will provide the Executive Board with a letter from Maine DOT designating Brian Beeler/ NNEPRA as its NGEN representative. The letter is expected to be forthcoming in a few days.

Task Complete. Steve Hewitt and Eric Curtit were provided with a letter from Maine DOT Commissioner naming NNEPRA (Brian Beeler) as its representative on the NGEN Board.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the March 18, 2014 conference call meeting – Eric Curtit:

On a motion by Stan Hunter, Caltrans, and a second by Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT, the Minutes from the March 18, 2014 conference call meeting were approved without objection.

5. Progress Report: Mid-West States – Section 6 – Eric Curtit:

Eric Curtit reported that this effort is underway and making progress. Eric was unavailable for the most recent meeting, and asked Larry Salci if he had been present and, if so, would he provide an update.

Larry reported that “it was a good meeting” and that Wynne Davis, FRA chaired it. It was well attended by mid-west state representatives. The discussion revolved around next steps in advancing task 2 and 3 in regard to section 6 requirements. The group discussed needs for vehicle maintenance and also potential organizational options.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2014, in Wisconsin.

Overall, Larry noted, “things are moving” and at the next meeting they will “look at a draft of what an RFP for a third party consultant would look like, if that was the way they decided to go”.

6. Status Update: Diesel-electric Locomotive – John Oimoen, IDOT:

John Oimoen, IDOT, was unavailable for today’s call, but provided the following update for inclusion in the minutes. Steve Hewitt read the update into the record:

“The procurement process is moving forward and we have completed the following:

Master Agreement has been signed

Notice to proceed has been issued to Siemens

Washington and Illinois have completed their ordering agreements and Caltrans is in their final stages of completing theirs.

Kickoff Meeting is scheduled for April 14 and 15 in Sacramento at Siemens plant.”

Stan Hunter added that Caltrans’ order agreement is expected to be executed today.

7. Status Update: Bi-Level Cars – Stan Hunter:

Stan Hunter provided an in depth overview of what has been a “busy time” for the bi-level car procurement effort.

The Final Design Review (FDR) is underway and is currently in week 2.

Next week the FDR continues in Japan; the following week it will move to Volpe for a structural analysis meeting.

Last week was extremely productive as a mock up review of a number of subsystems took place in Rochelle, Illinois.

The review went well and demonstrated that some of the designs were very close to completion, only needing a few tweaks.

In certain cases, such as the electric locker, it was discovered that some re-design is necessary. In regard to the electric locker – it is too congested – and not very user friendly. This will be corrected, and Stan emphasized that it is a good thing that these kinds of issues are discovered now during the FDR process rather than as the equipment is being built.

Stan anticipates that the FDR will be completed by the end of April, early May, 2014, and he noted that material for the first car has begun to be made as they begin to transition from design and engineering to “a real car.”

Larry Salci agreed that it had been an extremely productive week, and that “Stan’s characterization is accurate.”

Larry added that the Rochelle Nippon Sharyo plant is modern and is laid out very well. He noted that Nippon Sharyo “has done it in a structured, ramped up way with an incremental approach that will lend it-self to being very successful.”

Dave Warner, The NGEC Revision Control Coordinator, commented on the need for some urgency noting that “there is a risk with every day that goes by, if a change is submitted that is found unacceptable to the Review Panel and the Executive Board for being PRIIA compliant.”

A discussion ensued with regard to the timing of getting in the list of changes to the specification that will need to go through the NGEC process in order to ensure compliance with the PRIIA requirements.

Stan noted that the documentation is nearly complete, and he is hopeful that the list of changes will be ready for submittal to the Executive Board by the end of April, 2014.

Larry Salci noted “with the FDR being completed by the end of April...that’s the time for the change list to go to the NGEC” and he added “the end of April is the best time to have an all-encompassing list.”

During the discussion it was also noted that there is a similar situation with the Diesel-electric locomotive procurement. There are changes to that specification as well which will need to be reviewed under the NGEC process.

8.
Status update: 305-209 Working Group – Ron Pate:

Ron Pate was unavailable for today’s call, so the working group update was tabled until the next Executive Board call.

9.
Discussion: NGEC Future – Next Steps – Eric Curtit:

Eric Curtit reminded Board members that it was important for the Board to re-engage in the discussion about the NGEC future. He asked all Board members to review the material from the NGEC working group’s efforts in 2013, which Steve Hewitt distributed after the last call.

Eric noted that the previous group had done a lot of work – “talked about functions and came up with a concept which came under some criticism as being not the best option.”

He asked that members review the material, and, “we will discuss it again on the next call” and, at that time he may put a team together to determine the next steps.

This will remain as a standing agenda item.

10.
Discussion: Virginia DRPT Request – Eric Curtit:

Eric reported that among the items that he has asked Steve Hewitt to help him “clean up”, is a long standing request for a “tri-mode” locomotive specification had been sent to Bill Bronte from the Virginia Department of Rail

and Public Transportation (DRPT).

The request referred to the need for a new technology of dual-powered diesel and electric locomotives, and asked that the NGEC develop a specification for it.

Eric suggested that the best way to handle this is for him to call Kevin Paige, Virginia DRPT, to discuss the request, and get a sense of the universe in regard to states needs for this type of equipment. (This is similar to the way the request for an NGEC DMU specification was handled – through a basic states needs assessment.)

A fairly lengthy discussion took place.

Patrick Centolanzi, FTA, commented on the fact that the technology is there already.

Mario Bergeron noted that Patrick is correct that the technology exists, but that the issue is really “what are the needs?” He noted that the request refers to Dual Mode, but it really needs to be Tri-mode.

Patrick Centolanzi suggested that this be part of the agenda for another call to “see if it would work for places like the NEC” and he noted, that it “may not be out of sight.”

Dave Warner agreed that the technology is there and available, but the PRIIA charge is to develop standardized equipment, and this is really niche (or “a niche of a niche”), and may not be the “best use of the PRIIA volunteers.”

Mario Bergeron again weighed in with an emphasis on the fact that “the technology is second to this discussion, first is determining the need and establishing potential purchasers.” He again suggested “we ask the states to identify needs for purchasing such locomotives, similar to what we did with the DMUs. If there is a need for the states, than that is the key for this committee.”

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT, commented on the fact that, even if a locomotive (such as the Dual Mode locomotive that New York has requested to be developed by the NGEC), is considered niche, if a state wants to use federal funds FRA has determined that they must use PRIIA approved specifications. Ray noted “we recognize the limitations on resources and operational needs, but in the end, if a state wants to utilize FRA funds, the NGEC needs to be involved in the specification development.”

Eric Curtit re-stated his view that “the next step is to reach out to Kevin Paige and get a sense of the needs and to get his assistance in gauging those needs going forward”.

Ultimately, it was agreed that Eric will call Kevin Page and will report back to the Board on the results of that conversation.

11.

Discussion: Developing a Reauthorization Strategy for the NGEC – Eric Curtit/Ray Hessinger:

Eric Curtit reported that the Administrative Task Force had, on its last call, begun to discuss the possible development of a reauthorization strategy for the NGEC. Eric noted that the task force understood that the NGEC is comprised of states, FRA, and Amtrak and because of that fact, developing a strategy under the NGEC umbrella is difficult. However, it was agreed that this topic needed to be raised with the Board for its input. “What should we be doing? What are issues that we should be approaching from the perspective of the 3 levels (of NGEC members)?”

Eric went on to say that they are not looking to do anything that could be construed as lobbying, as it is understood that that is not something this organization can, or should, do, but he asks that everyone begin to think about “what we can do and how we can say it.”

Ray Hessinger commented – “when you are reviewing the NGEC future information that Steve Hewitt sent out, part of your thought process should be – is there anything, legislatively, that we need to do as Bill Bronte used to say, when we grow up”.

It was agreed that Board members should give the topic some thought and should submit any ideas they may have to Eric Curtit and Ray Hessinger, with a cc to Steve Hewitt, by COB April 11, 2014.

This topic will be an agenda item for the next Board call – April 15, 2014.

Adjourn:

With no other business forthcoming on today's call, Chairman Curtit adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:20pm Eastern.

The next call is: April 15, 2014, 11:30am Eastern

Decisions/Action Items – 4-1-14 Executive Board Conference Call

At the Annual Meeting, the Executive Board accepted the Task 1 report and has determined that Tasks 2 and 3 will move to the mid-west states to develop their Section 6 plans. The effort is underway with the mid-west states meeting face to face on a monthly basis and beginning to assess needs for vehicle maintenance and also potential organizational options. The next meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2014 in Wisconsin. This remains as a standing agenda item for Executive Board calls.

305-209 Working Group updates: Ron Pate will provide a list of the members of the 514 working group to Steve Hewitt to update the NGEC record.

A DRAFT SOW for a consultant is under review, and the intent was to bring it to the Board for its consideration on today's (April 1, 2014) call. (In Ron Pate's absence, this did not occur today) It is anticipated that this will be an agenda item for the next call – April 15, 2014.

Bi-Level Review Panel Membership: Eric Curtit will follow up with NCDOT about possibly becoming a member of the Bi-Level Review Panel.

NGEC Procurement updates: The 2 procurements – bi-level cars and the diesel-electric locomotives-will continue to be standing agenda items on the Executive Board calls. The bi-level is currently in the process FDR. The locomotive procurement is progressing well with a master agreement having been signed and a notice to proceed having been given. The kick off meeting is scheduled for April 14-15, 2014 in Sacramento, Ca.

NGEC Future discussion: Board members are asked to think about how best to proceed moving forward and to review the material provided by Steve Hewitt after the March 18th call. A discussion of potential next steps, and the possible establishment of a working group will be an agenda item on the April 15, 2014 conference call.

Virginia DRPT request: Eric Curtit will reach out to Kevin Paige to get his assistance in gauging the needs for this type of equipment going forward, and will report back to the Board on the next call.

Developing a Reauthorization Strategy: It was agreed that Board members should give this topic some thought and should submit any ideas they may have to Eric Curtit and Ray Hessinger, with a cc to Steve Hewitt, by COB April 11, 2014.

Next Call: April 15, 2014