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Our Vision: The NGENC provides national leadership in standardization, acquisition, and management of passenger rail equipment.

SECTION 305 NGENC Executive Board

MINUTES

1-7-25

11:30 EASTERN

CONFERENCE CALL

FACILITATOR	<i>Ray Hessinger, Chair S305 NGENC Executive Board</i>
ATTENDEES	Board Members or representatives: Ray Hessinger, Dan Ruppert, Tim Ziethen, Mike Murray, Melina Lopez, Melina Lopez as proxy for Amanda Martin, Brian Beeler II, Kena Lederle, Richard Kedzior, Curt Massie for Jason Biggs, Sarah Hernandez for Kyle Gradinger Mike Jenkins Support Staff and Colleagues: Joe Paul, Steve Hewitt, Larry Salci, Tammy Krause, Kevin Myles, Dave "Mr. Emeritus" Warner
ABSENTEES	Board Members: Kyle Gradinger, Jason Biggs, Jason Orthner, Support/Colleagues: Ryan Sharpe, Melissa Shurland, Jon Dees, Shayne Gill, Strat Cavros, Barley Fields

DECISIONS MADE

1.

Welcome – Ray Hessinger, Chair, NGENC Executive Board:

Chairman Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT, opened the meeting, and asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll.

2.

Roll Call –Steve Hewitt, NGENC Program Manager:

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

3.

Ongoing Items Status Review of items not on today’s agenda – Steve Hewitt:

Industry Participants as of 1-7-24:

Staying steady at around 200.

NGEC two-pager:

2024 version – 488 distributed (Electronic and hard copy).

Currently, updating the two-pager for 2025 is on hold until there is further clarity as to the future of the NGENC.

Multi State Venture Car Procurement as of 10-10-24:

All coach type FDR and FAI stages are complete, including Cab Car and Café Car.

The Cab Car FAI and FRA sample car inspections are complete, and the first cars have been conditionally accepted. The Cab Car 238.111(b) testing is complete, and the test report is nearly complete. The IDOT café cars are being shipped to Chicago and placed into revenue service as available.

All 137 cars are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. IDOT coaches and Caltrans trainsets are being added to revenue service as they are commissioned and accepted.

Steve Hewitt again noted that Caltrans has not provided an update on this procurement since 10-10-24, and

asked he has sent emails to Kyle Gradinger and others requesting an update for the Technical Subcommittee meeting on 1-16-25. No response.

Next Update: as available

CtDOT Rail Car Procurement as of 11-7-24 and reported to the Technical subcommittee on that date:

We're working on reviewing and approving the last of the PDR documents. Planning for in person IDR meetings with the design team in December 2024 and January 2025.

Steve Hewitt has also sent a request for an update to Marci Petterson.

Next Update: as appropriate

Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement as of 11-21-24:

The first two Locomotives had been delivered to Metro-North at Croton Harmon, NY in late October 2024 and were starting the process of inspection for acceptance.

Next Update: Technical subcommittee meeting on 1-16-25.

Amtrak Vehicle Procurements as of 11-7-24 and reported to the Technical subcommittee on that date:

On the new Acela:

All is moving along at a steady rate – they are working on final qualification testing and going forward with training.

On Airo:

This procurement is progressing well and is on schedule for spring 2025 for testing the first trainset on the corridor. There are 72 coach cars and 7 locomotives in production.

On the ALC 42:

Dan reported that this procurement continues at a steady state – averaging one or two a month. There are 64 in service out of a base order of 75. There will be a little slower rate going forward as they turn to the option order of 50.

On the Long-Distance Trainsets:

Continues as an active RFP. Amtrak is continuing to work with carbuilders with a goal of an award next year.

On the GP38 – 10 are in production, 5 are on site and 21 of 36 have been conditionally accepted. (Nothing new reported on this procurement on 11-7-24.)

Next Update: Technical subcommittee meeting on 1-16-25.

FRA Research Presentation Series:

The November presentation was given on 11-7-24 to the Technical Subcommittee by Anand Prabhakaran, Sharma and Associates on:

"Overview of FRA's Glazing Retention Research"

The PowerPoint presentation from 11-7-24 will be provided to Steve Hewitt and distributed to members and to AASHTO for posting to the NGEC website.

Next Presentation: Technical subcommittee meeting on 1-16-25.

4.

Approval of the Minutes from the 12-10-24 Meeting– Ray Hessinger:

On a motion offered by Melina Lopez, IDOT, and seconded by Richard Kedzior, Wisconsin DOT, the minutes from the 12-10-24 meeting were approved as submitted.

**5.
Treasurer's Report and Funding Discussion –Tim Ziethen:**

Tim Ziethen reported that the final balance and spend rate for FY24 is:

Total Invoiced/Incurred (Including Carryover) - \$176,756.44
Accrual Amount to Reflect Billing Lag 60 days – \$7,530.66
invoiced + Accrual Expenses to date (through September 2024) – \$184,287.10
Amtrak AOP Funding - \$260,000
Average Monthly Spend – \$14,729.70.

Funding committed to the NGEC and allocated by Amtrak Finance is \$100,000 for FY25. Based on the average spend rate, this funding should take the NGEC through at least 3-31-25. The \$100,000, however it is available until expended.

There has not been an invoice from AASHTO since September (on the new funding of \$100,000.) This is not unusual as there is usually a 60-day delay in billing.

Status: Three-month extension Amtrak/AASHTO and AASHTO/sub-contractors (through 3-31-25):

Nothing new reported on this as AASHTO was not in attendance for this meeting. As of the last meeting, AASHTO had received the note from Amtrak extending the performance period to at least March 31, 2025, and AASHTO was to execute the extension with Amtrak and then execute extensions with the sub-contractors.

Status: Internal Amtrak Discussions on Future Funding for the NGEC – Amtrak Gov't Affairs/Legal:

Tim Ziethen reported:

George Hull secured the \$100,000 from Amtrak Finance to extend the NGEC funding, based on the current spend rate, to at least 3-31-25. He clarified that the funding is available until expended.

Internally, Tim has had discussions with Amtrak Government Affairs and has not been able to secure additional funding beyond the current \$100,000. He has not been able to ascertain any new options at this point. Tim added that he is "not holding out hope at this point...we are very constrained in our funding".

Tim continued, "we are now at the point where we would ask FRA if there were any other options...we are at that point." He added "there are two challenges – there is no requirement for Amtrak to fund it (NGEC) and we have tried twice – unsuccessfully – to get a CRISI Grant for the NGEC."

"We need to discuss any other options such as the hold-back (as previously discussed)."

"Again, we have had internal discussions but have nothing more has been identified at this point."

Ray Hessinger opened the floor for discussion:

Tim Ziethen added that the holidays did make it difficult to have specific conversations and an outreach to FRA has not happened.

Ray – "I will be in DC (Crystal City, Va – for the AASHTO, SPRC SAIPRC meetings) at the end of the month and I plan to have a conversation with Paul Nissenbaum, FRA to get his thoughts."

Mike Jenkins, Oregon DOT – "In anticipation of a new Administration" and uncertainty with where things go, "I would like to emphasize the importance of this Committee" and the value it adds.

Mike suggested that it may be reasonable to go into "some level of hibernation – on whatever the current budget can support, to see where things are. It's easier to bring it out of hibernation than to start all over again. We could hibernate until we have figured it out (funding)." Mike added, "I would hate to start from scratch. I value the Committee and the work that has been done – it has been great!"

Ray Hessinger noted that he understands what Mike is suggesting but is concerned about "how we keep the industry members around (if we hibernate). The Executive Board "would be fine – it's keeping the industry around – the Technical subcommittee will stick around but the industry..."

Mike Jenkins replied, "I agree, it is something to be addressed with them (the industry) also."

Ray added, "The funding is good until expended – the current budget takes us to March or April – a hibernation or

smaller footprint could extend that". He asked Tammy Krause to give her Document Control update to "let us know where you are going on things (priority items) before "we continue this discussion and make a recommendation from here".

6.
Status: Document Control – priority efforts – Tammy Krause:

Tammy Krause provided the following update for inclusion in today's minutes:

The Single Level Specification Revision is going to be discussed at the next TSC meeting (1-16-25). We will submit the two approved Mechanical DCRs and plan to vote on the changes at the February TSC meeting.

The Vehicle Working Group has completed their work and their document will be voted on at the 1/16/25 TSC meeting.

We continue to work on removing the Amtrak references from the sub-specs.

Note: Prior to Tammy determining that there would be a discussion on the Single Level spec, Steve Hewitt suggested that if it would make sense to go ahead and vote on the Single Level Spec with two of the three primary DCRs having been adjudicated and to table the third one which is still with AAR. Steve noted that the spec update has been hanging out there for a very long time and rather than wait for one DCR to be approved – it seems to be better to table the one and go forward with the single level spec update or revision with the 131 DCRS already in place and add the two DCRS that have been approved by the Mechanical working group.

Tammy agreed that this could be done and added it to her report and the timeline.

Steve asked Tech SC chair Dan Ruppert if he concurred. Dan responded that it made sense to him.

Ray Hessinger agreed as well.

Steve Hewitt reiterated that the plan would be that the Technical subcommittee would consider approval of the Vehicle Weight Specification Revision 1.1 on 1-16-25 (He will distribute the proposed spec along with the 1-16-25 agenda) and discuss the plan for the Single Level specification and provide the two approved DCRs for full subcommittee review.

Steve added that the Technical Subcommittee (TSC) will not meet on 1-30-25 because of the Rail meetings that week in Crystal City, Va. The next meeting of the TSC would be on 2-13-25 and the goal would be to vote on the Single Level Specification Revision with the previously approved DCRs and approval of the two coming out of the Mechanical working group.

Item 5 discussion continued:

Ray Hessinger agreed with the plan as laid out by Steve Hewitt for the TSC. He noted that he did not think the Executive Board should meet until after the TSC has voted and the Board has action to take.

Steve Hewitt suggested that the Executive Board meetings scheduled for 1-21-25 and 2-4-25 be canceled and that the next meeting of the Board would be 2-18-25. This would follow not only the TSC meeting on 2-13-25, but also the Finance and Administrative subcommittee (FASC) meeting scheduled for 2-12-25.

Steve went on to suggest that the FASC meeting scheduled for 1-15-25 be canceled to allow time for Amtrak and FRA to have discussions about funding options and he noted that FRA has determined recently that it is not planning to participate in FASC meetings unless there is something more to approve than meeting minutes. Hopefully, this gap in the meeting schedule will provide the necessary time for Tim Ziethen or other Amtrak reps to talk to Mike Murray or whoever he recommends from FRA about options including the proposed concept on having a hold back or set aside of a small percentage of FRA grants for equipment targeted for the NGECC. This concept was raised by MODOT during a FASC call and briefly discussed during the Executive Board meetings that have followed, but a discussion with FRA is critical.

Ray Hessinger agreed with the plan as outlined by Steve Hewitt and added that this will also give him the time to try to meet with Paul Nissenbaum while in the DC area the week of 1-27-25 for the CORT, SPRC and SAIPRC meetings. Mike Jenkins added that he would be there to support Ray in meeting with Paul. Ray was pleased with Mike joining him and added "as many members as possible in support" would be great! Ray and Mike suggested that Amtrak participation would be beneficial as well. Dan Ruppert, Amtrak, agreed and said that he would talk to George Hull about it and determine who would participate from Amtrak. Steve Hewitt added that AASHTO is supporting the NGECC in its Reauthorization proposals for Congress and should be willing to participate in a discussion with Paul Nissenbaum. Ray agreed and will talk to Shayne Gill.

As the schedule is laid out – it is anticipated that the NGEC Executive Board would meet on 2-18-25 and have enough input to potentially make the determination as to whether or not it has a path forward with additional funding or needs to hibernate for a time – and what that looks like – or if it needs to plan a shut down.

Steve Hewitt will send out a new schedule to the FASC and Executive Board as well as the Technical subcommittee. Steve reminded members that a cancelation notice via Outlook does not take the meeting off of individual calendars – it needs to be removed by the recipient.

7.

Adjourn – Ray Hessinger:

With no other business forthcoming, Chairman Hessinger adjourned the 1-7-25 meeting of the NGEC Executive Board at 12:01PM Eastern.

Next Executive Board Meeting 2-18-25

Decisions/Action Items

Funding the NGEC – Next steps/actions as of 1-7-25

Gap Funding:

Amtrak Finance has committed \$100,000 to funding the NGEC retroactive to 10-1-24 through 3-31-25 or until expended.

Amtrak Government Affairs:

Status: Tim Ziethen has had internal discussions and no new funding option within Amtrak has been identified. It is at the point where Tim needs to reach out to Mike Murray, FRA, or whoever he recommends, to have a discussion about other options including the concept of a take-down or hold back from FRA grants for the NGEC similar to how Amtrak does it.

Further Discussions/actions identified on 1-7-25:

The Executive Board will not meet again until 2-18-25.

The FASC will not meet again until 2-12-25

The Tech SC will meet on 1-16-25 and 2-13-25 – canceling 1-30-25 due to the Rail meetings that week in Crystal City, Va.

Tim Ziethen will reach out to FRA to discuss options such as the take down/hold back concept.

Ray Hessinger and other Executive Board members will plan to meet with Paul Nissenbaum, FRA, while in the DC area for the Rail meetings during the week of 1-27-25.

The FASC meeting on 2-12-25 should be one during which a recommendation on potential options should be considered in advance of the 2-18-25 Executive Board meeting.

The Tech SC will plan to vote on the Vehicle Weight Spec Revision 1.1 on 1-16-25 and on the Single Level Spec Revision on 2-13-25. If approved, these updated specs will be submitted to the Executive Board for consideration during the 2-18-25 meeting.

The Executive Board – when it meets on 2-18-25 – expects to be in a position to determine next steps – move forward if a new funding option has been identified; hibernate – and determine what that entails – until new funding is identified or the current funds are expended; identify steps to shut down the NGEC.

Treasurer’s Report:

Current balance/spend rate through September 2024:

Total Invoiced/Incurred (Including Carryover) - \$176,756.44

Accrual Amount to Reflect Billing Lag 60 days – \$7,530.66
invoiced + Accrual Expenses to date (through September 2024) – \$184,287.10
Amtrak AOP Funding - \$260,000
Average Monthly Spend – \$14,729.70.

This closes out the FY24 funding provided by Amtrak Operating Expenses (AOP) Funding balance does not carry over year to year.

Funding committed to the NGECC and allocated by Amtrak Finance is \$100,000 for FY25. This funding will take the NGECC through at least 3-31-25 based on its average spend-rate. It is available until expended.

Status - Document Control Management as of 1-7-25:

The Single Level Specification Revision is going to be discussed at the next TSC meeting (1-16-25). We will submit the two approved Mechanical DCRs and plan to vote on the changes at the February TSC meeting.

The Vehicle Working Group has completed their work and their document will be voted on at the 1/16/25 TSC meeting.

We continue to work on removing the Amtrak references from the sub-specs.

Next Update: 1-16-25 to the Tech SC

2024 NGECC Backgrounder educational document:

The 2024 version of the two-page educational flyer is now available electronically or in hard copy by request from Steve Hewitt. It is also posted on the NGECC website www.ngecc.org.

To date: 488 copies have been distributed (hard/soft).

Status: The process for updating the two-pager for 2025 remains on hold until there is a better sense of the future of the NGECC beyond 12-31-24.

Industry Participation:

As of 1-7-25, industry involvement continues to remain steady. Currently there are around 200 industry participants.

Multi-state Venture Car Procurement as of 10-10-24:

All coach type FDR and FAI stages are complete, including Cab Car and Café Car.

The Cab Car FAI and FRA sample car inspections are complete, and the first cars have been conditionally accepted. The Cab Car 238.111(b) testing is complete, and the test report is nearly complete. The IDOT café cars are being shipped to Chicago and placed into revenue service as available.

All 137 cars are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. IDOT coaches and Caltrans trainsets are being added to revenue service as they are commissioned and accepted.

Status: Steve Hewitt noted, on 12-10-24, that Caltrans has not provided an update on this procurement since 10-10-24, and asked Sarah Hernandez to mention this to Kyle Gradinger to see if an update could be available for the next Board meeting (or the Technical Subcommittee meeting on 12-19-24).

Next Update: as provided

Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement as of 11-7-24:

From Marci Petterson, CtDOT: *We're working on reviewing and approving the last of the PDR documents. Planning for in person IDR meetings with the design team in December 2024 and January 2025.*

Next Update: as appropriate

Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement as of 11-21-24:

The first two Locomotives had been delivered to Metro-North at Croton Harmon, NY in late October 2024 and were starting the process of inspection for acceptance.

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On the Long-Distance Trainsets:

Continues as an active RFP. Amtrak is continuing to work with carbuilders with a goal of an award next year.

On the GP38 – 10 are in production, 5 are on site and 21 of 36 have been conditionally accepted. (Nothing new reported on this procurement on 11-7-24.)

Next Update: as appropriate

VIA Rail Equipment Procurement:

VIA Rail gave a detailed presentation during the 2024 NGEN Annual Meeting and will be invited to do the same at the 2025 Meeting.

Next Update: as appropriate

Updates: States and Amtrak – Charger Locomotive and Venture Cars Experience:

Detailed updates were provided during the 2024 Annual Meeting.

Next Update: As Appropriate

Filling Vacancies on the Review Panels:

Caltrans has named Ryan Sharpe as its representative on the Single Level Rail Car Specification Review Panel. The other panels still have vacancies (Caltrans), but the Single Level Spec is the most critical as it will be reconvened once the Technical Subcommittee has completed its review of DCRs for that specification.

FRA Research Presentation Series:

The November presentation was given on 11-7-24 by Anand Prabhakaran, Sharma and Associates on:

“Overview of FRA's Glazing Retention Research”

Next Presentation:

January 16, 2025 – topic yet to be identified.

Next Executive Board Meeting 2-18-25

**Agenda
1-7-25**

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| 1. Welcome and Open the Meeting | Ray Hessinger |
| 2. Roll call | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Action Items Status Review | Steve Hewitt |
| 4. Approval of Minutes from 12-10-24 meeting | Ray Hessinger |
| 5. Treasurer's Report, FASC updates, Funding | Tim Ziethen |
| Final Balance/Spend Rate for 10-1-23 through 9-30-24 | |
| Beginning Balance and Spend rate 10-1-24 through 3-31-25 | |
| Status: three-month extension Amtrak/AASHTO and AASHTO/sub-contractors (through 3-31-25) | |
| Status: Internal Amtrak Discussions on future funding of the NGEC – Gov't Affairs/Amtrak Legal: | |
| Potential options/feasibility/legality: | |
| Take Down/set aside percentage of passenger rail equipment procurement grants | |
| - Legal feasibility | |
| - Percentage | |
| - Mechanism | |
| Status: Outreach to FRA – short term and long-term options discussion | |
| Next Steps? | |
| 6. Status: Document Control – priority efforts | Tammy Krause |
| 7. Other/Adjourn | Ray Hessinger |

Next Executive Board Meeting 2-18-25