

SECTION 305 FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES

OCTOBER 12,
2022

3:00PM EASTERN

WEBEX MEETING

FACILITATOR	<i>Tim Ziethen, Chair of the S305 Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)</i>
ATTENDEES	<i>Tim Ziethen, Jeff Gordon, Brian Beeler II, Amanda Martin, Amanda Martin also as proxy for John Oimoen, Shayne Gill, Rebecca Anger, Mike Murray, Steve Hewitt</i>
ABSENTEES	<i>Troy Hughes, Ray Hessinger, Jason Biggs, John Oimoen, Larry Salci, Strat Cavros</i>

DECISIONS MADE

1. Welcome and Open Meeting – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak:

FASC Chair Tim Ziethen opened the meeting and asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll.

2. Roll Call – Steve Hewitt:

After calling the roll, Steve Hewitt confirmed the presence of a quorum.

3.

Approval of Minutes from the 9-14-22 conference calls – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak

On a motion by Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT, and a second by Brian Beeler II for Maine DOT, the minutes from the 9-14-22 FASC call were approved as submitted.

4.

Treasurer's Update – Tim Ziethen:

Balance and Spend Rate:

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.
Expenses Incurred through August 2022: \$1,029,098.11
Balance remaining: \$ 215,629.76
Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$14,568.59
Estimated Balance at the end of the Extension Period (Contingency): \$26,238.03

The estimated balance will be where the costs for the website refresh will be derived.

5.

NGEC Website Refresh Agreement – Status – Steve:

As reported last week (10-4-22) during the Executive Board call:

The vendor (iEngineering) has acquired a domain for the NGEC. It is ngec.org.

The vendor has conducted a review of the existing website architecture and has proposed a new look.

The vendor, AASHTO and NGEC representatives met, via Zoom, twice in September to review the new architecture.

On the last call with the vendor, AASHTO and NGEC representatives (Steve Hewitt and Ray Hessinger), there were a number of discussions about whether to keep the NGEC word documents (of which there are many) in that format or convert them to web pages. The conversion could be done easily, and it may make sense rather than keep them all as reference documents.

Tasks I and II are complete and Task III is underway.

Earlier this week, (10-11-22) the vendor sent the design mockup for the new NGEC website to the sub-group (Ray, Steve, Tim, (NGEC) and Shayne, Strat, David Dubov (AASHTO) asking for review and approval. The design is based on

the WordPress website theme that was approved during the last meeting.

Specifically, iEngineering asked for feedback on the following:

As part of your approval, please also provide feedback on the following items:

- 1. The existing NGEC website does not have webpage text content as the majority of the content is based on downloadable files. We have added text content in the design mockup to make the website provide context to downloadable files. Please review this text content and let us know if any changes are required.*
- 2. The downloadable files on the existing NGEC website are in multiple formats including PDF, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. For website security, we do not recommend including Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) file formats as downloadable files. We recommend all downloadable files be converted into PDF format. If you agree, we will convert all files into PDF as part of the data migration task.*
- 3. We have included links to social media sites in the website footer. Please let us know if you plan to have social media presence so that we can add appropriate social media links. If yes, please provide us with the URLs of the NGEC social media pages. Else, we will remove the social media links from the website footer.*

Steve Hewitt responded on the question (2.) regarding the recommended format of the downloadable files – stating that he agrees they should be converted to PDF.

Members of the FASC on today's call agreed that converting these files to PDF is more secure and the right way to go.

Steve also noted that he requested that the opening (Vision) statement on the site be corrected by removing the word "financing" since the Board had approved that change long ago, and the vendor was using an earlier version.

Steve also commented on some of the content text. iEngineering agreed to remove the word "financing" from the opening statement and asked that Steve continue to review the mock-up and provide further comments.

On the item #3, FASC members discussed the fact that the NGEC is not currently on social media, and, unless a member wanted to volunteer to perform the function of participating on social media for the NGEC, there is no intent for it to become involved.

Steve Hewitt will let the vendor know that social media is not something the NGEC is currently involved in, so social media links do not need to be included in the website footer.

Steve Hewitt will be talking to Ray Hessinger this Friday, and will likely add this item to the Executive Board meeting agenda for next week, (10-18-22) and will share the mock-up during that call.

6. Updating the two-pager for 2023 - Steve:

Discussion: Members were asked on the last call to provide input on possible changes that should be included in the 2023 version.

No comments or suggested changes were forthcoming on today's (10-12-22) call. The next step is that Steve Hewitt and John Oimoen will make recommendations for updates for discussion on the next FASC call (11-9-22).

7. By-Laws Annual Review and proposed updates – Steve/John:

On the August FASC call, Steve Hewitt and John Oimoen provided proposed changes to the NGEC By-Laws. Members were asked to review the proposed changes and provide input. On the call in September, since no comments had been received, Chairman Ziethen had extended the review and input for another month with the intent of taking a vote in October (this call) in consideration of sending the proposed changes to the Executive Board for its consideration. The Board is required to have any proposed changes in writing for 30 days before a vote to adopt can be taken.

The proposed changes first discussed on the 8-17-22 FASC call are:

e. The Executive Board may issue news releases communicating activities or accomplishments of the Committee.

- f. *The Executive Board may authorize Committee member participation at related meetings, conferences, trade shows, or other similar events to communicate the activities of the Committee or to maintain visibility among stakeholders.*

This new language is meant to address the advice provided by Amtrak Legal when asked if the NGEC could conduct certain additional activities. The advice was that the activities described would be permissible, if included in the By-Laws.

8. Vote to send the proposed By-Laws changes to the NGEC Executive Board – Tim:

Since there were no new comments from those on the call today, Chairman Ziethen called for a motion and a second to approve the recommended By-Laws revisions for submittal to the NGEC Executive Board for its consideration per the NGEC By-Laws requirement of not sooner than 30 days after receiving the proposed changes in writing.

The motion to send the recommended revisions to the NGEC Executive Board for its consideration in compliance with the NGEC By-Laws was offered by Brian Beeler II for Maine DOT and was seconded by Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT.

With no further discussion forthcoming, Tim Ziethen asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll of voting members present and, with all voting in the affirmative, the motion was approved.

9. Exploring Funding Opportunities for the NGEC – Tim Ziethen:

- a. Status – CRISI Grant application – Tim Ziethen:

(Note: At this point in the call, the FRA reps left the call shortly after the discussion began due to not wanting a conflict of interest to be perceived when the NGEC discusses funding or grant applications that they (FRA) will ultimately be reviewing.)

Tim Ziethen reported that the Grants office at Amtrak has taken the lead in writing the actual grant application. Tim had done a DRAFT narrative which advanced through the Amtrak Leadership Team. This means that the proposed application for an NGEC grant will be a part of Amtrak's grant submittals. Once it advanced through the Leadership team it was sent over to the Grants office. The next step (once the application is completed) would be to submit it to FRA. Tim is in dialogue with Amtrak Legal for clarity as to whether he can share the application with the NGEC Executive Board for review and comment prior to its submittal to FRA.

As the application is submitted, letters in support from the industry and from individual states will be critical. Steve Hewitt agreed to provide Tim Ziethen with the email addresses of the NGEC industry participants and of the NGEC and SPRC state members.

The deadline for submitting the application is December 1, 2022.

- b. Other possibilities

There was nothing new to report on other possible funding options.

8. Other issues/questions – All:

Adjourn:

With no other business forthcoming, Tim Ziethen adjourned the call at 3:31pm Eastern.

By Computer: <https://stephenhewitthewittconsulting.my.webex.com/meet/shewitt109>

by phone: 1-415-655-0001

Access code: 126-073-1531

Next call – 11-9-22

Decisions - Action Items

Treasurer's Report – 10-12-22:

Balance and Spend Rate:

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.

Expenses Incurred through August 2022: \$1,029,098.11

Balance remaining: \$ 215,629.76

Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$14,568.59

Estimated Balance at the end of the Extension Period (Contingency): \$26,238.03

The estimated balance will be where the costs for the website refresh will be derived.

Exploring/confirming funding options beyond 9-30-2023

As of 10-12-22:

Tim Ziethen reported that the Grants office at Amtrak has taken the lead in writing the actual grant application. Tim had done a DRAFT narrative which advanced through the Amtrak Leadership Team. This means that the proposed application for an NGEC grant will be a part of Amtrak's grant submittals. Once it advanced through the Leadership team it was sent over to the Grants office. The next step (once the application is completed) would be to submit it to FRA. Tim is in dialogue with Amtrak Legal for clarity as to whether he can share the application with the NGEC Executive Board for review and comment prior to its submittal to FRA.

As the application is submitted, letters in support from the industry and from individual states will be critical. Steve Hewitt agreed to provide Tim Ziethen with the email addresses of the NGEC industry participants and of the NGEC and SPRC state members.

The deadline for submitting the application is December 1, 2022.

NGEC two-pager:

Distribution of Educational Document 2022:

As of 10-12-22, 625 copies of the NGEC 2022 two-pager educational document have been distributed.

Updating the two-pager:

Steve Hewitt and John Oimoen will provide recommendations for updating the two-pager for 2023 during the 11-9-22 FASC call.

Quarterly Grant Progress Report to FRA:

The FFY 2022 3rd quarter report was submitted on time – at the end of July 2022.

The next report (4th quarter) is due to FRA by COB 10-31-22.

NGEC Website Refresh:

As of 10-12-22:

The vendor (iEngineering) has acquired a domain for the NGEC. It is ngec.org.

The vendor has conducted a review of the existing website architecture and has proposed a new look.

The vendor, AASHTO and NGEC representatives met, via Zoom, twice in September to review the new architecture.

On the last call with the vendor, AASHTO and NGECC representatives (Steve Hewitt and Ray Hessinger), there were a number of discussions about whether to keep the NGECC word documents (of which there are many) in that format or convert them to web pages. The conversion could be done easily, and it may make sense rather than keep them all as reference documents.

Tasks I and II are complete and Task III is underway.

Earlier this week, (10-11-22) the vendor sent the design mockup for the new NGECC website to the sub-group (Ray, Steve, Tim, (NGECC) and Shayne, Strat, David Dubov (AASHTO) asking for review and approval. The design is based on the WordPress website theme that was approved during the last meeting.

Specifically, iEngineering asked for feedback on the following:

As part of your approval, please also provide feedback on the following items:

4. *The existing NGECC website does not have webpage text content as the majority of the content is based on downloadable files. We have added text content in the design mockup to make the website provide context to downloadable files. Please review this text content and let us know if any changes are required.*
5. *The downloadable files on the existing NGECC website are in multiple formats including PDF, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. For website security, we do not recommend including Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) file formats as downloadable files. We recommend all downloadable files be converted into PDF format. If you agree, we will convert all files into PDF as part of the data migration task.*
6. *We have included links to social media sites in the website footer. Please let us know if you plan to have social media presence so that we can add appropriate social media links. If yes, please provide us with the URLs of the NGECC social media pages. Else, we will remove the social media links from the website footer.*

Steve Hewitt responded on the question (item #2) regarding the recommended format of the downloadable files – stating that he agrees they should be converted to PDF.

Members of the FASC on today's call agreed that converting these files to PDF is more secure and the right way to go.

Steve also noted that he requested that the opening (Vision) statement on the site be corrected by removing the word "financing" since the Board had approved that change long ago, and the vendor was using an earlier version.

Steve also commented on some of the content text. iEngineering agreed to remove the word "financing" from the opening statement and asked that Steve continue to review the mock-up and provide further comments.

On the item #3, FASC members discussed the fact that the NGECC is not currently on social media, and, unless a member wanted to volunteer to perform the function of participating on social media for the NGECC, there is no intent for it to become involved.

Steve Hewitt will let the vendor know that social media is not something the NGECC is currently involved in, so social media links do not need to be included in the website footer.

Steve Hewitt will be talking to Ray Hessinger this Friday, and will likely add this item to the Executive Board meeting agenda for next week, (10-18-22) and will share the mock-up during that call.

Wisconsin DOT representation on FASC:

By Computer: <https://stephenhewitthewittconsulting.my.webex.com/meet/shewitt109>

by phone: 1-415-655-0001

Access code: 126-073-1531

Next Call 11-9-22

ATTACHMENTS



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

SECTION 305 NGEC Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)

Web Ex video/audio information:

By Computer: <https://stephenhewittconsulting.my.webex.com/meet/shewitt109>

by phone: 1-415-655-0001

Access code: 126-073-1531

**AGENDA
10-12-22**

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Welcome/Open | Tim Ziethen |
| 2. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approval – Minutes from 9-14-22 | Tim Ziethen |
| 4. Treasurer’s Update- Balance and Spend Rate | Tim Ziethen |
| 5. Website Refresh Status Update | Ray/Steve |
| 6. Updating the two-pager for 2023: | Steve |
| Discussion: Members were asked to review and provide input for changes to the two-pager | |
| 7. By-Laws Annual Review and proposed updates | Steve/John |
| Discussion: Members were asked to review the proposed changes/updates and provide input | |
| 8. Vote to send the proposed By-Laws changes to the NGEC Executive Board | Tim |
| 9. Exploring Funding Opportunities for the NGEC – updates: | Tim |
| a. Status – CRISI Grant application | |
| b. Other possibilities | |
| 10. Other Issues/questions | All |

Next Call 11-9-22