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

## SECTION 305 NGEC Executive Board

MINUTES

NOVEMBER 28, 2023

11:30 EASTERN

CONFERENCE CALL

<b>FACILITATOR</b>	<i>Ray Hessinger, Chair S305 NGEC Executive Board</i>
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	<b>Board Members:</b> Ray Hessinger, George Hull, Tim Ziethen, Jeff Gordon, John Oimoen, Amanda Martin, Kyle Gradinger, Troy Hughes, Richard Kedzior, Jon Dees for Jason Orthner <b>Support Staff and Colleagues:</b> Joe Paul, Steve Hewitt, Strat Cavros, Tammy Krause, Patrick Centolanzi
<b>ABSENTEES</b>	<b>Board Members:</b> Jason Biggs, Jason Orthner, Mike Jenkins, Brian Beeler II <b>Support/Colleagues:</b> Mike Murray, Barley Fields, Barley Fields, Shayne Gill, Larry Salci, Dave "Emeritus" Warner

### DECISIONS MADE

**1.**

**Welcome – Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT, Chair, NGEC Executive Board:**

Chairman Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT, was delayed in the beginning due to another meeting running overtime, so Vice Chairman George Hull opened the meeting, and asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll.

**2.**

**Roll Call –Steve Hewitt, NGEC Program Manager:**

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

**3.**

**Action items Review – Steve Hewitt:**

Steve Hewitt provided a brief review of action/ongoing tracking items not on today's agenda.

**Industry Participation:**

Industry involvement continues to remain steady. Currently there are 205 industry participants.

**2023 NGEC two-pager Handout Flyer:**

The 2023 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 NGEC website [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org).

To date: 368 copies have been distributed.

**VIA Rail Equipment Procurement:**

VIA Rail gave a detailed presentation during the 2023 NGEC Annual Meeting and will be invited to do the same at the 2024 Meeting.

**Next Update – 2-2-2024 – NGEC Annual Meeting**

**Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement:**

On 10-12-23, Marci Petterson reported to the Technical Subcommittee that the kick-off meeting was held and they have begun pre-design meetings.

**Next Update – As available**

**CTDOT will be invited to provide an update during the 2024 Annual Meeting.**

**NGEC 2024 Annual Meeting:**

The NGEC 2024 Annual meeting will be held on 2-2-24 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. It will, once again, be held in conjunction with other rail-related meetings being held that week including SPRC, SAIPRC and AASHTO CORT.

AASHTO has provided the hotel link for the rail meetings to be held during that week. As always, the NGEC is a part of several meetings held in conjunction with AASHTO's Council on Rail Transportation.

Below is an updated link for the 2024 Winter Rail Meeting provided by Kamasha Hendrickson, AASHTO Senior Meeting Planner:

The per diem rate is now \$193 per night (single/Double rooms). Please share this updated link with your attendees.

<https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/group-booking/WASRW/G-HTO4>

Cut-Off Date: January 5, 2024

**Kamasha Hendrickson, CMP, CGMP**

Senior Meeting Planner

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

555 12th St, NW, Suite 1000

Washington, DC 20004

Tel: 202-624-5403

E-mail: [khendrickson@aaashto.org](mailto:khendrickson@aaashto.org)

**4.**

**Approval of the Minutes from the 10-31-23 meeting– George Hull – NGEC Vice Chair:**

On a motion offered by Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT, and seconded by Richard Kedzior, Wisconsin DOT, the minutes from the 10-31-23 meeting were approved as submitted.

**5.**

**Update: Multi-state Venture Car Procurement – Steve Hewitt for Caltrans:**

On behalf of Kyle Gradinger, Steve Hewitt read the most recent update (from the 11-7-23 Technical Subcommittee meeting), into the record for today's minutes:

- *The remaining Cab Car FDR items are in the closure stage with final submittals in work. The Cab Car MCAT simulation report has been approved by the states and the FRA. IDOT Café Car system level FDR reviews are complete and the requested Café Car MCAT simulations have also been submitted to the FRA for review.*
- *The Cab Car Complete FAI and FRA sample car inspection occurred in July with open items in review and closure.*
- *137 cars are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. IDOT coaches are currently in revenue service and Caltrans is preparing for crew familiarization and shakedown testing of the first trainset pending completion of maintenance items and necessary training.*

Kyle Gradinger added that they are starting the maintenance and training today (11-28-23) and expect to begin revenue service by the middle of next week (week of 12-3-23).

**6.**

**Update: Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement – Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT:**

Ray Hessinger reported that he has not received an update from Metro-North for October and therefore did not have much to provide beyond what was previously reported. Primary focus has been on FAIs on many types of components and everything has been proceeding on schedule.

**7.**

**Update: Amtrak Vehicle Procurements – George Hull:**

On the new Acela:

Work continues on various qualifications.

On the Charger Locomotives:

Amtrak continues to take delivery of units and add routes where they are in service. All is moving along well.

On the Airo trainsets:

There are car shells in production and they are finalizing FAI's.

On the Long-Distance procurement – an RFP should be out by the end of the year.

**8.**

**Update: Document Control Management – Tammy Krause:**

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

*There are three items to report on;*

- *Update Specification 305-901 is ready to be signed except I need to remove the signature line for Amtrak's CMO. Should be with Ray this week for signature.*
- *The Materials WG continues to meet and work their way through the Single Level Specification. This week they worked on Dissimilar Metals, Aluminum Corrosion Protection and Aluminum Finishing.*
- *I am updating the WG Member Lists and I will be sending them to the WG Leaders. Melissa Shurland will replace Jeff Gordon on the Mechanical WG, and the Weigh WG will hopefully finish their tasks before Jeff retires.*

**9.**

**Treasurer's Report and status update on NGEC Funding – Tim Ziethen:**

Tim Ziethen provided the following update:

**Balance/Spend Rate Through September 2023**

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

Expenses incurred through September 2023: \$1,257,530.66

Balance remaining: (\$7,530.66).

Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$15,150.97.

Estimated Balance at the end of the Grant Period: (\$7,530.66).

Amtrak will pick up the overage as noted previously.

**Status: 6-month no-cost grant agreement extension:**

The 6-month no-cost agreement has been approved and will allow drawdown for any additional expenses that may come in against the prior grant for 6-months.

Strat Cavros, AASHTO, confirmed that he has received and signed the 6-month no-cost extension.

**Prior Grant Agreement Close-out items – actions:**

Tim Ziethen reported that there will be certain close out actions required by the end of March 2024, and that he is working with the Amtrak grants office to identify what those actions are.

**Status – Contract Modifications for the Sub-Contractors:**

Tim Ziethen reaffirmed that the Amtrak AOP budget (\$260,000) is approved for NGEC 305 Committee – continued work funded per work plan. Tim also noted that the PO language has been sent to AASHTO and once executed, between Amtrak and AASHTO, the contract modifications extending the sub-contractor agreements through 9-30-24 can be

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executed by AASHTO.

Strat Cavros stated that there was some language that needed to be ironed out and that he and Tim should discuss. Once the language is resolved he will formally issue the sub-contractor modification/extension.

**Seeking Long-Term Funding – discuss next steps/options:**

Tim Ziethen reported that there still needs to be discussions of long-term funding. He noted that another CRISI NOFO will be coming out next year and Amtrak could, again, apply for funding for the NGEC through that program. Tim also noted that Amtrak and FRA are planning to meet to discuss other potential funding options.

**Status: Requesting a Debrief with FRA on the previous CRISI Grant Application:**

Tim also reported that Amtrak had its debrief with FRA on the CRISI grant application submitted for NGEC funding. FRA stated that there were no issues with the application it was well done and provided the right information, it was simply a matter of the requests coming in out-weighted the funds available, and FRA had to make decisions on which applications to award with limited funds available. Tim noted that they were encouraged to apply again in the next round as well as continue to discuss other potential options.

**By-Laws Annual Review – FASC Recommendation**

Tim reported that the FASC is recommending no changes to the By-Laws are needed at this time.

Steve Hewitt provided a summary of the steps in the review process that led to the decision by the FASC to recommend no changes after completing the annual review. He also pointed out that no formal action was required, unless Board members felt there were changes needed. If that were the case a Board member would be able to submit proposed changes at any time in writing. After being in their possession for 30-days, the Board could bring the proposed changes up for consideration of adoption.

With no additional comments forthcoming, the Board accepts the FASC recommendation and Steve Hewitt will note that the Annual Review took place and no formal action was required as no changes were recommended.

**NGEC two-pager updates for 2024 version – FASC Recommendations:**

**Steve Hewitt walked through the FASC recommendations for updating the two-pager for 2024:**

**FASC Recommendations for updates to the two-pager for 2024:**

On Page one:

- Insert a new photo.
- Change date to 2024 in the upper right-hand corner.
- Update the Timeline column by including current numbers of Charger Locomotives and Venture cars in service. (*John Oimoen, provided updated numbers (64 in service 68 by year's end) but Steve has not received numbers on the Chargers. Steve will ask Joe Paul, Amtrak, if he has updated numbers.*)
- Troy Hughes that on the timeline the updating of the 305-900 NGEC Reference specification series be included so as to show that there were activities during 2023.

**Action: Joe Paul agreed there are 68 IDOT Venture cars in service today (11-28-23) and that he will provide updated numbers on the Chargers as well.**

On Page two:

- Update the photos. Steve noted there are three currently on Page two and refreshing them would be good to do. (*John Oimoen sent photos of the interiors and Art Peterson sent new exterior pictures. These were all forwarded to the FASC prior to this call – 11-8-23*).
- Steve Hewitt noted that he was aware of one additional entity - Utah Transit Authority (UTA)- that was using the NGEC specs. All other listed under Realization on the second page continue to be relevant. He asked members of FASC to let him know if there are others.
- Troy Hughes commented on the GOALS stated on page two and was concerned that it is inaccurate as the cost savings have not necessarily been realized. Steve Hewitt suggested that while it may not have happened yet, the goal to get there still exists. He suggested the line below the stated goal be removed for accuracy.

**Action: John Oimoen has additional – more of a broader interior view – photos of the café car which would be "more representative of what it looks like". John will get the photos to Steve Hewitt.**

**Members are asked to provide any photos they may want to include for consideration as well as any**

**additional comments or suggestions beyond those recommended by the FASC. Steve Hewitt noted that the review and information requested should be completed by the December meeting of the Executive Board to allow MODOT graphic arts time to format and produce the 2024 version.**

**10.**

**Filling Vacancies on the NGENC Review Panels (Caltrans/IDOT) – Ray Hessinger:  
NGEC Executive Board – Specification Review Panels/Members: 2023**

Ray Hessinger, once again, reported on several Review Panels that have vacancies. The vacancies are seats that have always been filled by IDOT and Caltrans, and still should be.

**Consultants/ Technical Support to the Review Panels:**

Review Panel Consultant – Larry Salci  
NGEC Support – Steve Hewitt  
Technical Support – Tammy Krause  
Amtrak Technical Support – Mike Kraft

**Bi-Level Car Review Panel:**

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT – Chair

**Vacant Caltrans**

Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT  
Jeff Gordon, FRA - **Melissa Shurland, FRA**

**Locomotive Review Panel:**

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT – Chair

**Vacant Caltrans**

**Vacant - IDOT** (to be vacant)  
Jason Biggs, Washington State DOT  
Jeff Gordon, FRA - **Melissa Shurland, FRA**

**Trainset Review Panel:**

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT – Chair  
Ed Engle, Iowa DOT  
Jason Biggs, Washington State DOT  
Jeff Gordon, FRA- **Melissa Shurland, FRA**

**Single Level Rail Car Review Panel:**

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT -- Chair  
Ed Engle, Iowa DOT  
Jason Biggs, WSDOT  
Jeff Gordon, FRA - **Melissa Shurland, FRA**

**DMU Review Panel Members:**

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT -- Chair  
Jeff Gordon, FRA **Melissa Shurland, FRA**  
Brian Beeler, for Maine DOT  
**Vacant - Caltrans**

Kyle Gradinger, Caltrans, had to leave the call, but previously had noted that he would discuss Review Panel representation with Momo Tamaoki and ask for her recommendations as to Caltrans representation. He did note that Caltrans would want to remain on those panels but was not sure who would be the right person. He will get back to Steve Hewitt and Ray Hessinger.

John Oimoen stated that IDOT is still in the process of filling the vacancy left by Jennifer Bastian leaving IDOT, and he currently does not have anyone to take her place on these panels. He agreed that IDOT should retain its seat on the panels it has been on but may not have a name until after the Annual Meeting.

Jeff Gordon stated that he would suggest that Melissa Shurland, who will take his place on the Technical subcommittee when he retires at the end of the year, be named as the FRA's Review Panels representative at least for the time being.

**11.**

**Review current DRAFT Agenda for the NGENC Annual Meeting on 2-2-24 -Ray/Steve:**

Ray Hessinger provided a brief overview of the current DRAFT agenda for the Annual Meeting and requested further review by Executive Board members and speaker confirmation by the next Exec Board meeting. (12-19-23)

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A few speakers were named during the discussion on today's call:

Joe Paul will be the Amtrak representative to present the update on the Amtrak vehicle procurements and also top give the presentation on the Amtrak experience with the Chargers and Venture cars.

Melissa Shurland, FRA and Kristine Severson, Volpe will be the presenters for the Accessibility update.

Hamid Sharif-Kashani has been confirmed to present an update on the University of Nebraska High-Speed Wireless study.

Steve Hewitt will reach out to CTDOT and VIA Rail to ascertain their interest in giving presentations on their procurements.

Ray Hessinger will reach out to Metro-North about presenting on the Dual Mode Locomotive procurement.

Caltrans, IDOT and Washington State are asked to confirm speakers for their presentations on procurements and/or experiences with the Chargers and Venture Cars.

Tim Ziethen will be asked to look into getting a speaker from Amtrak Government Affairs and Mike Murray will be asked who from FRA will provide its update. In 2023 Mike gave the FRA presentation. This year he will be the Board member for FRA and may also be the one to provide the FRA update.

## **12.**

### **Discussion – Officers & State Exec Board Member Elections – Ray Hessinger:**

Ray Hessinger noted that the election of officers and State Board members will take place at the Annual Meeting in February (2-2-24).

Steve Hewitt walked through the process and asked that State members confirm, on the next call, if their State would like to remain on the Executive Board and to confirm their representative.

Two officer positions will be up for election – Chair (Ray Hessinger) and Secretary (John Oimoen). These are State positions. The Vice Chair and Treasurer, by precedent, are Amtrak representatives – currently George Hull as Vice Chair and Tim Ziethen as Treasurer. Amtrak can name another representative from the CMO office for its officer positions.

Ray Hessinger and John Oimoen confirmed their interest in staying on for another two-year term as Chair and Secretary, respectively.

Ray asked for volunteers to serve on the nominating committee to nominate the state Board representatives to two-year terms of office and the slate of officers.

Nominating Committee Members appointed on 11-28-23 by Chairman Hessinger:

Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT  
John Oimoen, IDOT  
Troy Hughes, MODOT

States are asked to inform Steve Hewitt as to their interest in remaining on the Board and to confirm who their representative to the Board will be.

## **13.**

### **Teams as the new web/conference service- Ray/Steve:**

Ray Hessinger reported that he and Steve Hewitt attempted a trial run with Teams as the new meeting service provider, but they were not successful. Neither Steve nor Ray has familiarity with Teams from an organizer standpoint as they both use Webex.

Amanda Martin offered to help Steve in scheduling through Teams. A call will be arranged. The plan is to change to Teams by the beginning of the year (2024).

## **14.**

### **Discussion:**

It was agreed that the next Executive Board Meeting will be held on 12-19-23 rather than 12-26-23 which would be where the 4-week cadence would land. Steve Hewitt will make the change to calendars.

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**15.**

**Adjourn – Ray Hessinger:**

With no other business forthcoming, Chairman Hessinger adjourned the 11-28-23 meeting of the Executive Board at 12:21 PM Eastern.

**Next Executive Board Meeting 12-19-23**

**Decisions/Action Items**

**Treasurer’s Report – 11-28-23:**

**Balance/Spend Rate Through September 2023**

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**FASC Updates and actions as of 11-28-23:**

**Status: 6-month no-cost grant agreement extension:**

The 6-month no-cost agreement has been approved and will allow drawdown for any additional expenses that may come in against the prior grant for 6-months.

Strat Cavros, AASHTO, confirmed that he has received and signed the 6-month no-cost extension.

**Prior Grant Agreement Close-out items – actions:**

Tim Ziethen reported that there will be certain close out actions required by the end of March 2024, and that he is working with the Amtrak grants office to identify what those actions are.

**Status – Contract Modifications for the Sub-Contractors:**

Tim Ziethen reaffirmed that the Amtrak AOP budget (\$260,000) is approved for NGECC 305 Committee – continued work funded per work plan. Tim also noted that the PO language has been sent to AASHTO and once executed, between Amtrak and AASHTO, the contract modifications extending the sub-contractor agreements through 9-30-24 can be executed by AASHTO.

Strat Cavros stated that there was some language that needed to be ironed out and that he and Tim should discuss. Once the language is resolved he will formally issue the sub-contractor modification/extension.

**Seeking Long-Term Funding – discuss next steps/options:**

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**Status: Requesting a Debrief with FRA on the previous CRISI Grant Application:**

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- *The Cab Car Complete FAI and FRA sample car inspection occurred in July with open items in review and closure.*
- *137 cars are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. IDOT coaches are currently in revenue service and Caltrans is preparing for crew familiarization and shakedown testing of the first trainset pending completion of maintenance items and necessary training.*

Kyle Gradinger added that they are starting the maintenance and training today (11-28-23) and expect to begin revenue service by the middle of next week (week of 12-3-23).

**Next Update – 12-19-23**

**Status: – Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement as of 10-3-23:**

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**Next Update – 2024 Annual Meeting (invited)**

**Status - Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Equipment:**

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On the Airo trainsets:

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On the Long-Distance procurement – an RFP should be out by the end of the year.

**Next Update – 12-19-23**

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**Next Update: 2-2 -2024 – NGEC Annual Meeting (invited)**

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

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Detailed Updates were provided during the 2023 Annual Meeting.

**Next Update: As appropriate**

**Filling Vacancies on the Review Panels:**

Kyle Gradinger, Caltrans, had to leave the call, but previously had noted that he would discuss Review Panel representation with Momo Tamaoki and ask for her recommendations as to Caltrans representation. He did note that Caltrans would want to remain on those panels but was not sure who would be the right person. He will get back to Steve Hewitt and Ray Hessinger.

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Jeff Gordon stated that he would suggest that Melissa Shurland, who will take his place on the Technical subcommittee when he retires at the end of the year, be named as the FRA's Review Panels representative at least for the time being.

**Changing web/conference service provider from WebEx to Teams:**

The NGEC will change to Teams as its service provider beginning in January 2024.

**NGEC 2024 Annual Meeting:**

The NGEC 2024 Annual meeting will be held on 2-2-24 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. It will, once again, be held in conjunction with other rail-related meetings being held that week including SPRC, SAIPRC and AASHTO CORT.

AASHTO has provided the hotel link for the rail meetings to be held during that week. As always, the NGEC is a part of several meetings held in conjunction with AASHTO's Council on Rail Transportation.

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<https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/group-booking/WASRW/G-HTO4>  
Cut-Off Date: January 5, 2024

**Kamasha Hendrickson, CMP, CGMP**

Senior Meeting Planner  
American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)  
555 12th St, NW, Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20004  
Tel: 202-624-5403  
E-mail: [khendrickson@aaashto.org](mailto:khendrickson@aaashto.org)

**Agenda:**

**See above for details on the current DRAFT agenda for the Annual Meeting. Speakers are still being confirmed and the intent is to try to finalize the agenda by the December meeting.**

**Officers & State Exec Board Member Elections:**

On 11-28-23, Ray Hessinger noted that the election of officers and State Board members will take place at the Annual Meeting in February (2-2-24).

Steve Hewitt walked through the process and asked that State members confirm, on the next call, if their State would like to remain on the Executive Board and to confirm their representative.

Two officer positions will be up for election – Chair (Ray Hessinger) and Secretary (John Oimoen). These are State positions. The Vice Chair and Treasurer, by precedent, are Amtrak representatives – currently George Hull as Vice Chair and Tim Ziethen as Treasurer. Amtrak can name another representative from the CMO office for its officer positions.

Ray Hessinger and John Oimoen confirmed their interest in staying on for another two-year term as Chair and Secretary, respectively.

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Ray asked for volunteers to serve on the nominating committee to nominate the state Board representatives to two- year terms of office and the slate of officers.

States are asked to inform Steve Hewitt as to their interest in remaining on the Board and to confirm who their representative to the Board will be.

**Appointing a Nominating Committee:**

Members appointed on 11-28-23 by Chairman Hessinger to serve on the nominating committee:

Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT  
John Oimoen, IDOT  
Troy Hughes, MODOT

**Next Meeting -12-19-23**

**NGEC Executive Board Meeting**

**11-28-23**

**11:30 AM – 12:30 Noon Eastern**

**By computer:**

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

**By phone:**

**1-415-655-0001**

**Access code:**

**126-073-1531**

**Agenda**

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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 10-31-23 Exec Board Meeting                             | Ray Hessinger  |
| 5. Update: Multi State Venture Car Procurement                                      | Kyle Gradinger |
| 6. Update: Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement                             | Ray Hessinger  |
| 7. Update: Amtrak Vehicle Procurements  | George Hull    |
| 8. Update: Document Control   | Tammy Krause   |
| 9. Treasurer's Update   | Tim Ziethen    |
| - Balance/Spend Rate/Forecast   |                |
| - Status – 6 month no-cost current grant agreement extension                        |                |
| - Current Grant Agreement - Close out actions required.                             |                |
| - Status: Contract Modifications/extensions Amtrak /AASHTO – AASHTO/ Subcontractors |                |
| - Seeking Long-Term Funding – discuss options/next steps.                           |                |
| - Status: Requesting a Debrief with FRA on the CRISI Grant Application              |                |
| - By-Laws Annual Review - FASC Recommendations                                      | Tim Ziethen    |
| - NGEC two-pager updates for 2024 – FASC Recommendations                            | Tim/Steve      |
| 10. Filling Vacancies on the NGEC Review Panels (Caltrans and IDOT and FRA)         | Ray Hessinger  |
| 11. Review current DRAFT Agenda for the NGEC Annual Meeting on 2-2-24               | Ray/Steve      |

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- 12. Discussion: Officers & State Exec Board member elections Ray/Steve
  - 13. Teams as new web/conference services Ray/Steve
  - 14. Discussion: Next Meeting? (12-26-23) suggest – change to 12-19-23 Ray
  - 15. Adjourn Ray Hessinger

**Next Meeting: 12-19-23**