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

## Section 305 Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee (NGEC)

**Monthly Activities Report: February 29, 2024**

**Submitted By: Steven J Hewitt, Program Manager, S305 NGEC**

### **Public law 110-432 required Amtrak to:**

*...establish a Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee, comprised of representatives of Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration, host freight railroad companies, passenger railroad equipment manufacturers, interested States, and as appropriate, other passenger railroad operators.*

*"The purpose of the Committee shall be to design, develop specifications for, and procure standardized next-generation corridor equipment.*

*(b) Functions – the Committee may –*

- 1) Determine the number of different types of equipment required, considering variations in operational needs and corridor infrastructure.*
- 2) Establish a pool of equipment to be used on corridor routes funded by participating states; and*
- 3) Subject agreements between Amtrak and States, utilize services provided by Amtrak to design, maintain and remanufacture equipment."*

### **Executive Board**

**Chair: Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT**

**Vice Chair: Dan Ruppert, Amtrak**

**Secretary: Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT**

**Treasurer: Tim Ziethen, Amtrak**

**The Executive Board will hold web- conference calls every 4 weeks on – Tuesdays at 11:30am Eastern.**

During the month of February 2024, the Executive Board met once – during the Annual Meeting held on 2-2-24.

Highlights, decisions, updates from the Annual Meeting:

The NGEC Annual meeting was held on 2-2-24. There were around 50 in-person attendees and 40-45 virtual attendees at this year's meeting. This number is down somewhat from the 2023 Annual Meeting, but still a significant number which shows that there is continued strong interest in the work of the NGEC.

Speaker presentations were some of the best, most informative that have been given since the start of the NGEC in January 2010. As more work is getting done and vehicles are being produced and put into service, the presentations have more detail and tell a story of success and growth in intercity passenger rail and the procurement of new vehicles using NGEC specifications as the base spec. The presentations and a detailed set of minutes of the Annual Meeting can be viewed on the NGEC website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org).

At the meeting, elections were held and the current State members of the Executive Board were elected to new two-year terms. All ten of the states that have been on the Board remained – some with new representation due to retirements or other changes. Officers were also elected or appointed to new two-year terms effective at the conclusion of the meeting.

**The officers of the NGECC are:**

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT – Chair  
Dan Ruppert, Amtrak – Vice Chair and Chair of the Technical subcommittee  
Tim Ziethen, Amtrak – Treasurer and Chair of the Finance and Administrative subcommittee (FASC)  
Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT – Secretary and Second Vice Chair of the FASC

**Full Executive Board Voting member list as of 2-2-24:**

State Members:

New York State Department of Transportation  
Representative: **Ray Hessinger**  
[Raymond.hessinger@dot.ny.gov](mailto:Raymond.hessinger@dot.ny.gov).

Iowa Department of Transportation  
Representative: **Amanda Martin**  
[amanda.martin@iowadot.us](mailto:amanda.martin@iowadot.us)

North Carolina Department of Transportation  
Representative: **Jason Orthner**  
[jorthner@ncdot.gov](mailto:jorthner@ncdot.gov)

Washington Department of Transportation  
Representative: **Jason Biggs**  
[Biggsjr@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:Biggsjr@wsdot.wa.gov)

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Representative: **Richard Kedzior**  
[Richard.kedzior@dot.wi.gov](mailto:Richard.kedzior@dot.wi.gov)

Missouri Department of Transportation  
Representative: **Troy Hughes**  
[Troy.Hughes@modot.mo.gov](mailto:Troy.Hughes@modot.mo.gov)

California Department of Transportation  
Representative: **Kyle Gradinger**  
[kyle.gradinger@dot.ca.gov](mailto:kyle.gradinger@dot.ca.gov)

Oregon Department of Transportation  
Representative: **Michael Jenkins**  
[Michael.I.jenkins@odot.state.or.us](mailto:Michael.I.jenkins@odot.state.or.us)

Maine Department of Transportation  
Representative: **Brian Beeler II, NNEPRA – designated by Maine DOT**  
[brian@nnepra.com](mailto:brian@nnepra.com) – c. 207 899-6089 p.207-780-1000 ext. 102

Illinois Department of Transportation  
Representative: **Melina Lopez**  
[Melina.lopez@illinois.gov](mailto:Melina.lopez@illinois.gov)

**AMTRAK:**

Representative: **Dan Ruppert**  
[Rupperd@amtrak.com](mailto:Rupperd@amtrak.com)

Representative: **Tim Ziethen, Amtrak**

[Ziethet@amtrak.com](mailto:Ziethet@amtrak.com)

**Federal Railroad Administration:**

Representative: **Mike Murray**  
[Michael.murray@dot.gov](mailto:Michael.murray@dot.gov)

Ongoing items as of 2-29-24:

- Treasurer's Report:
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**Balance/Spend Rate Through December 2023 – end of prior Grant:**

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,510,000.

Expenses incurred through December 2023: \$1,283,740.13

Balance remaining: \$ 226,759.87.

Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$14,749.89.

Estimated Balance at the end of the Grant Period: \$ 94,010.89

Status: Amtrak/AASHTO and AASHTO/Sub-Contractor Extensions as of 2-28-24:

On 2-28-24, Tim Ziethen reported that AASHTO and Amtrak have rectified the discrepancies they had with regard to the amount available with the new funding. The next step is to extend the sub-contractors in line with the current funding period.

Strat Cavros, AASHTO, stated that in a few days, he will send Steve Hewitt a contract amendment to extend his prior agreement through 9-30-24. He asked about the Krause and Casamar agreements. Steve Hewitt said that they usually would submit a scope of work and budget for the 12-month period to AASHTO and the two parties would then execute the agreements. Steve will reach out to Camren Cordell (Casamar) and to Tammy Krause and ask that they submit the SOW and budget to AASHTO with the work having begun on 10-1-23 and would run through 9-30-24. Steve added that the NGEC budget for both the technical writer and document control manager had been approved in October and was based on the work plan and budget submitted by both at that time. This is what should be the basis for what is to be submitted to AASHTO. He noted that they are already working and have been since the start of the new performance period.

Strat added that Larry Salci's work will be handled per task as it has been in the past. Larry submits a scope of work and budget each time he is asked to perform a Review Panel Report.

Clarifying Casamar Invoice FY23 overage:

Tim Ziethen reported that the Casamar invoice discrepancy has not yet been resolved and he has asked Tammy Krause to contact Casmar and get it clarified.

After some discussion, it was agreed that Steve Hewitt will reach out to Tammy and Camren and ask for a scope of work and budget for the 12-month period beginning on 10-1-23 and ending on 9-30-24.

As for the Casamar issue, Strat Cavros stated that the invoice submitted was through work performed into December 2023 and the overage was \$1015. AASHTO and Casamar had signed a modification for an additional \$9000 as approved by the Board during the prior grant period to get to the end of that period. Steve noted that if the invoice includes work performed after 9-30-23, it should be a part of the new agreement under the current funding source.

Steve will ask for a clarification from Camren on this as well as the new SOW and budget. He noted "the work was done". It seems that maybe the charges need to be allocated to the prior grant up to the \$1,015 and a second invoice charging against the new funding may be needed.

Seeking Long-Term Funding:

The intent is to continue to seek long-term funding for the NGEC. The interim funding being provided by Amtrak for FY 2024 is not intended to be long-term but rather a stop-gap to keep the NGEC going while it

explores funding options. Amtrak intends to apply again in the next round of CRISI Grant funding and will look into other potential options.

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

The 2023 review resulted in no changes being recommended. The By-Laws will next be reviewed in the Fall of 2024.

#### NGEC two-pager updates for 2024:

The NGEC 2024 Backgrounder and Educational document has been released and remains available by request from Steve Hewitt @ [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com).

As of 2-29-24, 460 copies have been distributed (hard copies and electronic). The document is also available on the NGEC website.

#### - Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement:

##### Metro-North's January update:

All FDRs are closed. Final Design of the locomotive is in process. Locomotive 301 is complete with testing anticipated around June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Locomotive 302 is ready for engine installation. Metro-North and Siemens are coordinating FAI testing and inspection process for shock and vibration collection assembly for third rail.

#### - Multi-State Venture Rail Car Procurement as reported by Caltrans on 2-29-24:

The Cab Car FDR is now approved, and all FDR stages are complete. The Cab Car and Café Car MCAT simulation reports have been approved by the states and the FRA.

The Cab Car Complete FAI and FRA sample car inspections have occurred with final open items in review and closure. The Cab Car 238.111(b) test plan is being revised based on recent comments for return to Amtrak and subsequent submittal to FRA. The first cab car and café car are being prepared for shipment.

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

#### - Amtrak Equipment Procurement Update as of 2-29-24:

##### On the Acela:

Staging and testing continues – they are about halfway through Statge 1 and are optimistic that it can be wrapped up in a month or two and move on to stage 2.

On the Airo trainset: Progress is strong – there are 34 in production – 32 coaches and 2 locomotives. Final FAIs and FDRs are taking place on open items on the café cars. The first trainset is anticipated to be on the corridor for testing in 2025 – there is a lot of optimism.

##### On the ALC 42:

They continue to get units in Wilmington for final testing. Thus far 48 have been accepted into service. 10 have been commissioned and are in the transit process. 67 are continuing in production. Dan added that there has been an improvement in the performance of the equipment and that the FAIs have had a positive impact.

##### On the GP38 Acquisition:

There continues to be a bit of a struggle with the vendor in getting it into service.

##### On the Long-Distance Trainsets:

An RFP went out in December 2023 and this is an active procurement.

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement:

On 2-2-24, Marci Petterson provided a detailed presentation on the CtDOT Rail Car procurement.

The presentation is posted in the Meetings section of the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org)

- VIA Rail Equipment Procurements:

A detailed update presentation was provided to the NGECC during the Annual Meeting on 2-2-24.

The presentation is posted in the Meetings section of the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org)

- Document Control Update -2-29-24:

- The Materials WG continues to meet regularly, their last meeting was 2/19 and their next meeting is 3/4.
- The Weight WG is planning to have one final meeting to review the DCRs that were received on their spec. The meeting will be held at a time to be determined by the availability of the DCR submitters. Dave wants them all on the meeting call so that the document can be finalized.
- I am working with the Technical Writer to create the DCRs for the single level document that are based upon previously submitted and approved DCRs for other specs that may apply to the single level.

A complete 2023 progress report and work plan for 2024 can be found on the NGECC website.

- Filling Vacancies:

Vacancies exist on the Specification Review Panels

Current status as of 2-29-24:

Consultants/ Technical Support to the Review Panels:

Review Panel Consultant – Larry Salci

NGECC 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

Melissa Shurland, FRA

Locomotive Review Panel:

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT – Chair

**Vacant Caltrans**

**Vacant - IDOT**

Jason Biggs, Washington State DOT

Melissa Shurland, FRA

Trainset Review Panel:

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT – Chair

Ed Engle, Iowa DOT

Jason Biggs, Washington State DOT

Melissa Shurland, FRA

Single Level Rail Car Review Panel:

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT -- Chair

Ed Engle, Iowa DOT

Jason Biggs, WSDOT

Melissa Shurland, FRA

DMU Review Panel Members:

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT -- Chair

Melissa Shurland, FRA

Brian Beeler, for Maine DOT

**Vacant - Caltrans**

**Technical subcommittee**

**Chair: Don Ruppert, Amtrak**

**Vice Chair: Joe Paul, Amtrak**

During the month of February 2024, the subcommittee met once – on the 29th:

Key decisions and action item updates from the month of January 2024, included:

- Backgrounder educational document:

The 2024 NGEC two-page educational was released on 2-2-24 at the NGEC Annual Meeting. It is available in electronic or hard copy versions. Requests should be sent to Steve Hewitt at [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com)

- Document Control Update as of 2-29-24:

See the update in the Executive Board section of this report and go to the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org) to see the Annual meeting presentation.

- Multi-State Car Procurement - Caltrans (Lead State) update as of 2-29-24:

See Executive Board section of this report for the status of the Venture car multi- state procurement.

Go to the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org) to see the Annual Meeting presentation on the Venture Cars Procurement and on the experience the states have had with the new railcars that are in service.

- Metro North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement as of 2-29-24:

See the Executive Board section of this report for the status of this procurement.

Go to the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org) to see the Annual Meeting presentation on the Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive procurement.

- Amtrak Equipment Procurement Updates as of 2-29-24:

See the Executive Board section of this report for the status of this procurement.

Go to the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org) to see the Annual Meeting presentation on the Amtrak Vehicle procurements and its experience with the equipment that has been placed in service.

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement:

Go to the website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org) to see the Annual Meeting presentation on the CtDOT Passenger Rail Car procurement.

- University of Nebraska/FRA study on High Speed wireless technology as of 2-29-24:

Hamid Sharif, University of Nebraska, provided a summary presentation on the High-Speed Wireless Study during the NGEAC Annual Meeting.

The presentation is available on the NGEAC website at [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org).

This study, as of 2-2-24 had not been granted funding from FRA for its next phase. The item will be tabled until further information is received.

*Hamid Sharif  
Advanced Telecommunications Engineering Lab  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

*Phone: 402-917-6363  
Email: HSHARIF@UNL.EDU*

- Specification for Rolling Stock Weight:

The Weight working group is scheduling a meeting to discuss DCRs that have been submitted. Once the group can get all entities that have submitted DCRs available, a meeting will be scheduled to resolve them and re-submit the proposed specification to the Technical Subcommittee.

### **The Finance and Administrative Subcommittee**

**Chair: Tim Ziethen, Amtrak**

**Vice Chair: Brian Beeler II, NNEPRA for Maine DOT**

**Second Vice Chair: Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT**

**The Finance and Administrative subcommittee (FASC) will hold a conference call every four weeks on Wednesdays at 3:00pm Eastern.**

During the Month of February 2024, the Finance and Administrative Subcommittee met once on the 28th.

Key decisions and action item updates from the month of February 2024 included:

#### **Balance/Spend Rate Through November 2023**

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,510,000.  
Expenses incurred through December 2023: \$1,283,740.13  
Balance remaining: \$ 226,759.87.  
Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$14,749.89.  
Estimated Balance at the end of the Grant Period: \$ 94,010.89

#### **Status – Contract Modifications Amtrak/AASHTO and AASHTO/Sub-Contractors:**

See Executive Board section of this report for details on this item.

Seeking Long-Term Funding:

The intent is to continue to seek long-term funding for the NGEAC. The interim funding being provided by Amtrak for FY 2024 is not intended to be long-term but rather a stop-gap to keep the NGEAC going while it explores funding options. Amtrak intends to apply again in the next round of CRISI Grant funding and will look into other potential options.

As of 2-29-24, the FRA had not published a NOFO for the next round of CRISI grants but expects that the announcement will be forthcoming soon.

- Conveying the message as of 2-29-24:

The NGEAC 2024 backgrounder/educational document was released during the 2024 Annual Meeting. To date 460 copies have been distributed (hard and soft).

Contact Steve Hewitt at [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com) to request a copy.

- Quarterly Grant Agreement Progress Report to FRA

All reports have been submitted on time.

The report for the period ending 12-31-23 was submitted on 1-30-24.

The next report will be due on 4-30-24 but will likely be an internal NGEC report as opposed to a formal report to the FRA since the funding source has changed to Amtrak and the prior grant will be closed out by 3-31-24.

- Annual NGEC By-Laws Review:

The 2023 review resulted in no changes being recommended.

The By-Laws will next be reviewed in the Fall of 2024.

#### **NGEC Specification Review Panel(s):**

**For each PRIIA NGEC specification a Review Panel has been established to compare the specification (as developed by the technical subcommittee) against a Requirements document previously adopted by the Executive Board. As the Review Panel completes its work, it prepares a report with recommendations. This report is submitted to the Executive Board for its consideration. Once accepted by the Board, the specification is subsequently formally adopted by the Executive Board. As part of the Document Control process, any proposed revisions to a PRIIA NGEC specification must go through the Review Panel process as well. At such times, the Review Panel, previously established for a specification, is re-convened by the Executive Board chair.**

The NGEC Review Panels did not meet in February 2024. Several vacancies are yet to be filled as discussed previously in this report.