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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: September 30, 2023

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: George Hull, Amtrak

Secretary: John Oimoen, IDOT

Treasurer: Tim Ziethen, Amtrak

Effective 8-8-23, the Executive Board will hold web- conference calls every 4 weeks on – Tuesdays at 11:30am Eastern.

- During the month of September 2023, the Executive Board met once- on the 5th.
Highlights, decisions, and action items status updates from the month of September include:
Treasurer's Report – 9-5-23:
- On 9-5-23, Tim Ziethen reported no changes to his last report:

Balance/Spend Rate Through June 2023

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.
Expenses Incurred through June 2023: \$1,233,509.83.
Balance remaining: \$16,490.17.

Estimated spending, at current rate, for balance of the Grant: \$45,685.55.
 Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$15,228.52.
 Estimated Balance at the end of the Grant Period: (\$29,195.38) over target.

Tim stated that the June invoice was particularly heavy and, although the next few months are usually light, there still remains three months in the performance period (July, August, September). It is not clear what the ending balance will be, but it is clear there will be an overage at the end of the grant. Tim added that Amtrak has agreed to cover any overage as a part of the 12-month interim finding plan for the NGEC.

Note: On 9-13-23 on the Finance and Administrative Subcommittee call, Tim provided an updated Balance and Spend report that covered invoices through July 2023. As anticipated July was a light month and brought the anticipated overage down to \$16,356.17. (See FASC report within this document for full update as of 9-13-23)

Status – 6-month no-cost current grant agreement extension:

As of this 9-13-23, Amtrak had not yet received the final word from FRA on the no-cost current grant agreement extension which would allow NGEC expenses incurred during the grant period to be paid beyond the 9-30-23 performance period.

Tim did not foresee this being a problem. There were some minor word changes that were being addressed and he was awaiting final execution of the agreement.

Status: NGEC 12-month Interim funding:

In July, the budget was approved (as submitted) during the Executive Session held on 7-25-23. Amtrak has said that it would fund the NGEC from its AOP for the 12-month period beginning on 10-1-23 through 9-30-24. The budget was approved for just over \$260,000. Amtrak also agreed that this funding would be provided even if Congress has not resolved the 2024 appropriations or issues a CR.

On 9-5-23, Tim Ziethen reported that the 12-month interim funding plan for the NGEC remains as a request within the Amtrak AOP for the coming federal fiscal year. The amount requested is just over \$260,000.

Tim noted that it remained contingent upon the Appropriations process. Currently Congress has not passed many of the appropriations bills and it is unknown whether a CR will be passed while they continue to work on passing those appropriations. Amtrak's funding is tied to appropriations. The federal fiscal year ends on 9-30-23. It is anticipated that funding will continue – even if through a CR, but there is the possibility of a temporary government shutdown.

This situation makes for some uncertainty for Amtrak, but there remains full support internally for the NGEC funding; it is simply unknown when or how the appropriations process will be resolved. Will there be a CR? Or will there be a stop gap funding of some sort?

As of the drafting of this activities report (9-27-23) there has been no resolution to the funding issue. Congress had not come to terms on a CR or on appropriations. The NGEC remains in limbo as its current grant agreement expires on 9-30-23. The Executive Board will meet as scheduled on 10-3-23 and this issue will be a primary agenda item.

- CRISI Grant Application Status:

On 9-23-23, the 2022 CRISI Grant Awards were announced by FRA. **The Amtrak application for NGEC funding was not one of the applications awarded a grant.**

As of 9-30-23, the NGEC has no funding committed to it. It has the Amtrak commitment to fund the NGEC for 12-months – but this is dependent upon the 2024 Appropriations process which as of this date, there has been no resolution to the issue of funding the government beyond 9-30-23.

On 10-3-23, the NGEC Executive Board will have NGEC funding as a key agenda item for discussion.

Status: 3rd Quarter Grant Progress Report to FRA:

The Quarterly Report was submitted to FRA on time.

The next report for the fourth quarter 2023 is due to FRA by October 31, 2023.

Steve Hewitt distributed the 3rd Quarter report with the DRAFT minutes from 8-8-23.

Added to the end of this monthly report are the milestones achieved through 9-30-23. These are used as a basis for the Quarterly Report – due at the end of October. Additional information will likely be required to complete the report with the closeout of the current Grant agreement.

- Executive Session: 7-25-23:

Jeff Gordon, FRA, offered a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose as stated by Tim Ziethen previously - to allow discussion without contractors present on the call before approving the proposed budget. The motion was seconded by Troy Hughes, MODOT, and, with no objections offered, the Executive Board agreed to go into Executive Session for the purpose as described above.

At 11:59 am, all contractors left the call and Steve Hewitt transferred the WebEx meeting control to Chairman Hessinger.

At the conclusion of the Executive Session – Chairman Hessinger sent the following email to Steve Hewitt:

Steve,

The results of the executive session are as follows:

The 2024 Budget is approved as presented today by unanimous voice vote.

The Executive Board and both Subcommittees are to review and update, as appropriate, their meeting cadence. Please add that issue to the agenda for the next meeting for each.

Ray

Steve Hewitt followed-up as noted and distributed the approved budget.

No change to this item in September 2023.

- 2023 NGEC two-pager:

The NGEC 2023 backgrounder/educational document was released in January and formally introduced during the Annual Meeting. To date 338 copies have been distributed (hard and soft).

Note: On 9-13-23 the FASC set a process and schedule for updating the NGEC two-pager for the 2024 version. The intent is to have it ready for distribution at the NGEC's Annual Meeting scheduled for 2-2-24.

- Multi-State Rail Car Procurement (provided by Caltrans to Steve Hewitt on 9-25-23:

The remaining Cab Car FDR submittals are in the final closure stage with all subsystems approved and final submittals are in the works. The Cab Car MCAT simulation report has been submitted to FRA via Amtrak additional clarifications provided. 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 Collision and Corner Post Appendix F test reports are approved. The Cab Car Complete FAI occurred on July 18 and the FRA Sample Car Inspection was completed on July 27. Open items from both are being addressed to prepare the cab car for PTC and 238 testing tentative for January.

137 cars are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. IDOT coaches are currently in revenue service and Caltrans is targeting revenue start in October pending completion of final open items.

- Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Equipment as of 9-27-23:

Ray Hessinger reported on 8-8-23 that he has not yet received the July report from Metro-North, so he tabled the update until the October Board Meeting. The Metro-North updates lag a month and are usually provided to NYSDOT around the second week of the month.

As of 9-27-23, there has been no update provided to the NGEC for September.

- Amtrak Equipment Procurement Update – as of 9-5-23:

On the new Acela: work continues on qualification issues with FRA for testing.

On the Charger Locomotives: Amtrak continues to progress deliveries – and they are doing well.

On the Airo trainsets: They are finishing Final Design Reviews (FDRs) and working on the car shell production. Things are moving along on schedule.

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement:

On 8-17-23, Marci Petterson, CtDOT, provided the following update to the technical subcommittee. On 9-5-23, Steve Hewitt read it into the record:

“CTDOT’s contract was awarded to Alstom on 8/3/23. Base order is for sixty cars – 19 cabs and forty-one trailers. There are options for up to an additional 272 cars. We are expecting a prototype 4-car consist in mid-2026. The delivery rate is four cars per month. Manufacturing is in Sahagun, Mexico.”

Marci specifically thanked the NGEC for the use of the NGEC Specification as a baseline for this procurement.

- VIA Rail Equipment Procurements:

A detailed update presentation was provided to the NGEC during the Annual Meeting on 2-3-23. The presentation is posted in the Meetings section of the website at www.ngec.org

Next Update: 2024 NGEC Annual Meeting 2-2-24

- Document Control Progress Report – 9-5-23:

Dave Warner, on behalf of Document Control Manager Tammy Krause, summarized the revisions/updates to PRIIA 305-901 as approved by the Technical Subcommittee on 8-31-23.

After the initial review of the updates provided general agreement in the Technical Subcommittee, a cleaner version with comments showing what had changed was distributed and additional comments were provided by several members of the subcommittee a new version was produced and was approved by the subcommittee on 8-31-23.

Board members received the updated/approved version with comments remaining so the changes would be easily seen.

In closing the overview, Dave noted the goal of this effort was to seek approval of the updated 305-901 document.

- Consideration of adoption of the updated 305-901 Reference Spec as approved by the tech subcommittee:

On 9-5-23, following Dave Warner’s summation, NGEC Chair Ray Hessinger asked if there were any questions or comments from Board members. Hearing none, he called for a motion to adopt PRIIA Reference Specification 305-901 Revision A as approved out of the Technical Subcommittee.

A motion to adopt was offered by Richard Kedzior, WisDOT and was seconded by John Oimoen, IDOT.

Steve Hewitt called the roll of voting members present or represented with the following results:

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT – aye
 George Hull, Amtrak – aye
 John Oimoen, IDOT – aye
 Tim Ziethen, Amtrak – aye
 Mike Murray, FRA – aye
 Amanda Martin Iowa DOT – aye
 Amanda Martin as proxy for Troy Hughe, MODOT – aye
 Mike Jenkins, Oregon DOT – aye
 Mike Jenkins as proxy for Jason Biggs, WSDOT-aye
 Richard Kedzior, Wisconsin DOT – aye
 Jason Orthner, NCDOT – aye
 Brian Beeler II, for Maine DOT – aye

With a quorum having been established and all votes having been cast in the affirmative, Ray Hessinger determined that consensus had been achieved and the motion was approved.

The document will be cleaned up and the cover page will be circulated for the signatures of Tammy Krause, Document Control Manager, George Hull, Technical Subcommittee Chair and Ray Hessinger, NGEN Executive Board Chair.

Once finalized the document will be added to the (00 series as 901 Revision A and available upon request from Steve Hewitt.

Due to a tight budget, Steve Hewitt suggested that technical writing wait until the new funding begins – hopefully on 10-1-23. It was later determined that there was enough budget in the Technical Writer's budget to complete the incorporation of the revisions to 305-901 before the end of the current grant agreement and the document technical writing is complete.

- Filling Review Panels Vacancies:

On 9-5-23, the Review Panel vacancies were discussed. Both IDOT and Caltrans have vacancies on one or more of the Review Panels. IDOT is resolving internal staffing issues and will provide a name for its vacancy as soon as possible.

Caltrans was not represented on the last two Executive Board calls, so the discussion of filling their vacancies was tabled until the October Executive Board meeting.

- NGEN 2024 Annual Meeting:

The NGEN Annual meeting for 2024 is scheduled for 2-2-24 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel Capitol Hill, Washington, DC.

Technical subcommittee

Chair: George Hull, Amtrak

Vice Chair: Joe Paul, Amtrak

Note: On August 8th the technical subcommittee discussed the cadence of its meetings as directed by the Executive Board and determined that the meetings would remain bi-weekly with the Chair and Steve Hewitt making the determination to cancel an up-coming meeting if the agenda was light.

During the month of September 2023, the subcommittee met once the 14th:

Key decisions and action item updates from the month of September 2023, included:

- Background educational document:

The 2023 NGENC two-page educational document/handout was released in January and distributed widely during the Annual Meeting on 2-3-23.

It remains available in electronic or hard copy versions. Requests should be sent to Steve Hewitt at shewitt109@aol.com

To date 338 copies have been distributed.

- Document Control Update as of 9-14-23:

On 9-14-23, Dave Warner reported that on 9-5-23, the NGENC Executive Board, PRIIA Reference Specification 305-901 Revision A was adopted. The document is now with the Technical Writer (Camren Cordell) and she is incorporating the administrative changes approved by the Technical Subcommittee and adopted by the Executive Board.

- Communications on Rail Cars Working Group & the Carbody Materials Working Group's status as of 9-30-23:

No change – there were no updates provided in September 2023:

Status: Communication on Rail Cars Working Group Activities: They are still working on finalizing the DTL software specification. They have had several meetings to discuss proposed changes – in particular those by one member. Thus far they have not been able to come to a resolution on this. Team Leader Ken Martin expects that the group will come to consensus and complete the DTL software spec by late September 2023.

Status: Carbody Materials Working Group Activities: Not much to report on this group's work as they have had difficulty getting together. It is expected that after the summer vacation season they will be able to re-convene and resume work.

- Multi-State Car Procurement - Caltrans (Lead State) update as of 9-27-23:

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

- Metro North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement as of 9-27-23:

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

- Amtrak Equipment Procurement Updates as of 9-14-23 reported by George Hull, Amtrak:

On 9-14-23 Tech subcommittee Vice Chair Joe Paul provided the following update:

On the new Acela – Testing continues.

On the Charger Locomotives – Amtrak continues to take delivery and commissioning at Wilmington. Joe estimated that 33 of 34 have been received from Siemens. He also noted that they are expanding where the units are running to the Northeast and Southeast.

On the Airo Trainset – Design Review continues and they are on schedule.

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement:

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

- University of Nebraska/FRA study on High Speed wireless technology as of 9-27-23:

No change from the 8-31-23 report.

Report from Hamid Sharif:

- "The University of Nebraska Advanced Telecommunications Engineering Lab has been studying the sub-giga-Hertz frequencies for rail applications to ease the current spectrum saturation for railroads, under the direction of FRA. We have studied the 160 MHz frequency as an example of these sub-giga Hertz bands. Theoretical and computer models were designed to represent a typical Transmitter, a Receiver, and a channel model for this frequency band. Then, different applications and rail scenarios were simulated, and performance data were collected. We have been doing field tests this summer to verify our lab data. We plan to publish our results this Fall. Any interested parties, please feel free to contact me for more information.

Additionally, as we plan for the next phase of this project, we are interested to hear any suggestions for implementing any other sub-giga frequencies or any specific rail application utilizing the 160 MHz.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss any utilization of our current work or suggestions and ideas for the next phase of this project. Thank you."

Hamid Sharif
Advanced Telecommunications Engineering Lab
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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

- Working Group on Specification Weight Issues as of 9-27-23:

Jeff Gordon, FRA, the working group team leader, reported in March 2023, that he intends to update the document based on working group feedback rather than schedule a meeting. He will then ask for input from the members via email. His issue is that he has been called for Jury duty and if enpaneled could be serving for 3 months and he would not be able to hold a working group meeting. If he is not enpaneled, this may change, but for now he intends to begin updating the document based on feedback received to date.

No change in September 2023

- Status: NGENC Funding – CRISI Grant Timeline – path forward:

The NGENC did not receive a 2022 CRISI Grant. The announcement of grants awarded was released on 9-25-23 and the NGENC was not included in the award list.

See the Executive Board section of this report for more detail on a potential path forward.

The Finance and Administrative Subcommittee

Chair: Tim Ziethen, Amtrak

Vice Chair: Brian Beeler II, NNEPRA for Maine DOT

Second Vice Chair: John Oimoen, Illinois 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 September, the Finance and Administrative Subcommittee met once on the 13th.

Note: The FASC discussed its' cadence of once every four weeks, and, like the Tech subcommittee, it left the cadence as is with the Chair and Steve Hewitt making the determination to cancel an up-coming meeting if the agenda was light.

Key decisions and action item updates from the month of September 2023 included:

Treasurer's Update- Balance and Spend Rate – Forecast as provided by Tim Ziethen:

Balance/Spend Rate Through July 2023

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.
Expenses Incurred through July 2023: \$1,236,204.83.
Balance remaining: \$13,795.17.
Estimated spending, at current rate, for balance of the Grant: \$30,151.34.
Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$15,075.67.
Estimated Balance at the end of the Grant Period: (\$16,356.17) over target.

With a light July spending rate, the forecasted overage came down from the estimate provided to the Executive Board on 9-5-23.

All in all, Tim believes we are pretty much on track and will be close at the end. (Amtrak has said it will cover the overage as a part of the interim spending plan.)

Status – 6 month no-cost current grant agreement extension:

As of this meeting, Amtrak has not yet received the final word from FRA on the no-cost current grant agreement extension which would allow NGEC expenses incurred during the grant period to be paid beyond the 9-30-23 performance period.

Tim does not foresee this being a problem. There were some minor wording changes that are being addressed and he is awaiting final execution of the agreement.

Next Steps/Close Out Documents required for grant agreement ending on 9-30-23:

Pending execution of the no-cost extension is the closeout process for the current grant. Once it is executed, Tim will have more information from grants and legal as to what is needed and what the process will be for final closeout of the current grant.

Update: NGEC 12-month Interim funding Proposal 9-13-23:

Tim Ziethen reported that the time for CRISI Grant awards is drawing closer and he continues to have hope that the Amtrak - NGEC CRISI Grant application will be successful.

Amtrak has agreed to fund the NGEC either to bridge the gap if awarded a CRISI Grant or for up to a year (12-months) at the agreed budget amount of about \$260,000. This budget is in the Amtrak request for FFY2024, but the AOP has not been approved by the Amtrak Board. Tim does not see the NGEC proposal being problematic as it is a small amount within the proposed Amtrak operating plan. Tim expects the AOP will be approved by Amtrak's Board shortly.

There is one caveat which is that Congress has to appropriate the funding and there could be some "drama" as the Congress works through its process for the FFY 24 spending plan.

Tim noted that he has asked Amtrak Grants and Amtrak Legal what Amtrak is authorized to do with respect of giving AASHTO the authority to extend resources (contracts with sub-contractors).

Tim emphasized that there is no plan to shut down or reduce the NGEC work – he just has not gotten answers yet.

Tim's recommendation is to not take any action to shut down anything – he believes it will all work out in the next 17 days or so.

Strat Cavros, AASHTO, had joined the call, and Tim repeated to Strat that he (Tim) is not recommending a shutdown of the NGEC work or activities, but he is waiting for guidance from Amtrak Grants and Legal to confirm how to continue operating with the knowledge that AASHTO would need to extend resources.

Strat responded "Ok, I will wait further direction."

CRISI Grant Application Status:

As noted earlier in this report – CRISI Awards have been announced by the FRA and the NGEC was not among those awarded grants.

- Conveying the message as of 9-13-23:

On 9-13-23, Steve Hewitt reported that it is also time to begin reviewing and updating the NGEC two pager educational document. The process used in the past has been similar to the By-Laws review – with John Oimoen and Steve Hewitt beginning the initial review and making recommendations. Steve did ask FASC members to look at the 2023 version and send John and Steve any recommended updates in advance of the 10-11-23 FASC call.

While the timeline is not as tight as the By-Laws review/update, it is somewhat condensed because the goal would be to release the 2024 version by the 2-2-24 NGEC Annual Meeting.

The process takes some time as the FASC ultimately makes recommendations to the full Executive Board and it has final say on approving the 2024 NGEC two-pager.

Steve Hewitt also noted that he would have to contact MODOT (Troy Hughes) to see if the graphic arts at MODOT would be willing to, once again, format and print the 2024 two-pager. MODOT has provided this service free to the NGEC for several years now, and they do a great job with a rapid turnaround.

It was agreed that the process as described by Steve Hewitt proceed.

The NGEC website is up and running at: www.ngec.org. Steve Hewitt reviews the website periodically and sends updates and/or changes to AASHTO – the maintainer of the site.

- Quarterly Grant Agreement Progress Report to FRA

All reports have been submitted on time.

The report for the period ending 9-30-23 is due to FRA by 10-31-23.

Annual NGEC By-Laws Review:

The By-Laws were updated in December 2022 and will again be reviewed in the Fall of 2023.

On 9-13-23, Steve Hewitt reminded FASC members that an Annual By-Laws review is required and that usually the process is that Steve Hewitt and John Oimoen (as Vice chair over FASC administrative issues) do the first review and make recommendations either for changes or to remain the same. Following that, the FASC considers the recommendations and sends them to the Board. The Board must have any proposed changes in their possession at least 30 days prior to taking a vote.

Steve recommended that he and John Oimoen conduct the initial review and provide recommendations to the FASC during the October meeting (10-11-23) – with a vote during the November meeting (11-8-23). This will give FASC members time to review any recommendations and provide comments in advance of approval of sending those recommendations to the Executive Board.

This timeline would provide the required thirty-day period for the Executive Board to have the changes in their possession and have a vote on them in December during that month's meeting (12-26-23). This would fulfill the requirement in the current grant agreement of conducting an annual By-Laws review.

Tim agreed and John Oimoen agreed on the process. Tim directed Steve Hewitt and John Oimoen to proceed as described but asked that, in doing so, they confirm if there are any references in the By-Laws to types of grant funding or alternate funding sources required or allowed in funding the NGEC.

Steve Hewitt agreed that this is on his radar and also noted that Amtrak Legal had already stated that it did not believe that there would be an impact on the By-Laws if there is an alternate funding source.

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 Bi-Level Rail Car Specification Review Panel was convened by the Chair in January and on February 14th the Panel went through the DRAFT Review Panel Report and Recommendations prepared by technical consultant Larry Salci. The Panel recommended approximately twenty additional revisions and on February 17th approved the Report and its Recommendations as revised by Mr. Salci in an electronic vote. On 2-21-23, the Report and its Recommendations were adopted by the Executive Board and the changes that will comprise 305-001 Revision D were sent to the technical writer for incorporation into the spec.

The Bi-Level Specification 305-001 Revision D has been completed and is available by request through Steve Hewitt.

The NGEC Review Panels did not meet in September 2023.

On 10-3-23, the Executive Board will look to fill vacancies that have occurred in recent months on some of the Review Panels.

Milestones – Quarterly update (July 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023)

Bi-weekly meetings:

Throughout the quarter, the NGEC Executive Board and the Technical subcommittee held bi-weekly conference calls with exceptions, as noted, due to a change in cadence.

All business of the Board, the Technical subcommittee and the Finance and Administration subcommittee continued to progress throughout the quarter.

Note: On 7-25-23, the Executive Board went into Executive Session and approved an interim 12-month budget to be funded by Amtrak beginning on 10-1-23 through 9-30-24. This was to be interim funding to fill the gap and maintain the minimum activities of the Committee while additional funds were sought. On 9-25-23, the NGEC learned that its CRISI Grant application was not one of those awarded as grant. The NGEC performance period under the current grant agreement expires on 9-30-23. Amtrak, as noted, has agreed to fund the NGEC for 12-months through its annual appropriations. As of 9-28-23, Congress has not passed a CR or a 2024 Appropriations bill. On 10-3-23 the Executive Board will meet and this will be the critical discussion topic.

On 7-25-23, the FRA asked that meeting cadences be discussed by the Executive Board and the two standing subcommittees on their next meetings.

The Executive Board agreed to reduce the meeting cadence from bi-weekly to once every four weeks on Tuesdays at 11:30am Eastern.

On August 8th the technical subcommittee discussed the cadence of its meetings as directed by the Executive Board and determined that the meetings would remain bi-weekly with the Chair and Steve Hewitt making the determination to cancel an up-coming meeting if the agenda was light.

On September 13, 2023

Monthly meetings:

On 9-13-23, the FASC discussed its' cadence of once every four weeks, and, like the Tech subcommittee, it left the cadence as is (every four weeks) with the Chair and Steve Hewitt making the determination to cancel an up-coming meeting if the agenda was light.

Dissemination of educational/informational pieces:

The 2023 two-page educational/backgrounder was released in February 2023. To date, 338 hard and soft versions have been distributed to NGEC members and various associations.

The website is up and running at www.ngec.org.

Updates and/or changes are provided to AASHTO by the NGEC Manager on a regular basis.

NGEC Annual Meeting:

The (13th) Annual Meeting of the NGEC took place virtually on 2-3-23 and was the NGEC's second Hybrid (in-person and virtual) meeting. The meeting was attended by approximately 110-115 members.

The NGEC's 2024 Annual Meeting is scheduled for 2-2-24 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel Capitol Hill, Washington, DC.

Annual Review of NGEC By-Laws and Operating Procedures:

The 2022 By-Laws review has been conducted. On 12-13-22, the NGEC Executive Board adopted revisions recommended by the Finance and Administrative subcommittee.

The By-Laws revisions, as approved on 12-13-22 have been incorporated into the document and it was distributed to all Board members in January 2023 and is posted to the NGEC website at www.ngec.org.

The 2023 Annual review of the NGEC By-Laws has begun (9-13-23) within the NGEC FASC. A schedule and process has been identified and agreed to by the subcommittee. Adoption of potential changes will be taken up in December 2023.

Grant reporting:

As required by the Grant Agreement, Amtrak will submit a quarterly report to the FRA. Information provided in the monthly NGEC Activities reports for the quarter, prepared by the NGEC Manager, will be utilized as a basis for the Quarterly Reports to the FRA.

All quarterly reports to date have been submitted on time to FRA.

The first quarterly report for FFY 2023 for the period covering 10-1-22 through 12-31-22 was submitted to FRA by 1-31-23.

The second quarterly report for FFY 2023 for the period ending March 31, 2023, was submitted to the FRA on time by the due date of 4-30-23.

The third quarterly report for FFY 2023 for the period beginning on 4-1-2023 and ending on 6-30-2023 was submitted to the FRA on time by the due date of 7-31-23.

The Final Quarterly Report for FY 2023 for the period beginning on 7-1-23 through 9-30-23 is due to the FRA by 10-31-23.

Fiscal and contractual actions:

During the April 1 to June 30, 2017, quarter, the Finance and Administrative subcommittee, and, subsequently, the Executive Board, adopted a motion that expressed the intent to extend the contracts of AASHTO and the subcontracts coordinated with the Grant Agreement and consistent with the budget and SOW. Currently, Amtrak and AASHTO are in the process of developing their contract extension and, following its execution, AASHTO has been directed to do the same with the sub-contracts identified in the SOW and noted in the adopted motion inserted below.

“As was intended in past NGENC budget approvals and to ensure compliance with the Audit of Grant Agreement of March 27, 2013, and the NGENC’s updated Procedure of Establishing Contract Support adopted August 6, 2013, the NGENC authorizes Amtrak to contract with AASHTO for administrative support services as well as subsequent sub-contracts per the statement of work for entities such as; with Hewitt Consulting for Manager of Support Services, and with SalciConsult for Specification Consultant services. In addition, with the Federal Railroad Administration’s June 8th, 2015, approval of the NGENC’s Supplemental Statement of Work and related budget extension through September 30, 2017, and its subsequent approval of the Statement of Work and Budget included in the Grant Agreement executed on October 26, 2016 for the period beginning October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2019, Amtrak is authorized to extend its agreement with AASHTO and AASHTO’s sub-consultants in accordance with the Statement of Work.”

Adopted by the NGENC Executive Board on 6-6-17.

On 9-26-17, AASHTO and Amtrak executed a contract extension for NGENC Support services to continue from 10-1-17 through 9-30-19. On 9-27-17 AASHTO executed a contract modification with Hewitt Consulting – (Steve Hewitt) extending the NGENC Manager’s contract for the period 10-1-17 through 9-30-19.

In the fourth quarter, 2017 – AASHTO and Amtrak executed a contract extension for technical support (spec writing) with Casamar – extending the contract through 9-30-19.

During the fourth quarter, NGENC Revision Control Coordinator (RCC), Tammy Krause, Amtrak, accepted the separation agreement and announced her departure to the NGENC Executive Board – effective 12-31-17. To fill the void created by this change, Amtrak has temporarily assigned these responsibilities to Michael Burshtin, Amtrak, and has begun taking steps needed to potentially subcontract this work similarly to how the other NGENC support services are provided. The SOW was revised by the NGENC Executive Board during this quarter to provide the flexibility to have the duties of the RCC conducted in house – Amtrak – or be subcontracted to a consultant. The Amtrak and FRA grants offices are reviewing the proposed change and, if approved, a sole source contract will be executed per NGENC Contract Management procedures.

As of 3-31-18, and as noted previously in this quarterly report, the NGENC Grant Agreement SOW revisions have been submitted to FRA and are under review. It is anticipated that the revisions will be approved and executed in April 2018. Simultaneously, the actions necessary to execute a contract for the Document Control Manager (DCM) have progressed with a revised SOW and budget having been submitted by the prospective sole source contractor for review and approval of the NGENC Treasurer and the Technical Subcommittee Chair who will be responsible for managing the work of the DCM.

During the quarter ending June 30, 2018, per the NGENC process, AASHTO executed a contract with TLK Associates, LLC (Tammy Krause) to perform the Document Control Management responsibilities, as identified in the SOW and budget, and as previously approved by the NGENC Executive Board.

During the quarter ending September 30, 2018, the FRA and Amtrak executed a no-cost 12-month extension (as approved by the NGENC Executive Board and formally requested by Amtrak) of the NGENC Grant Agreement. This extends the grant performance period to 9-30-2020.

Subsequently, on 5-8-19 AASHTO executed contract modification #2 with Hewitt Consulting – (Steve Hewitt) extending the NGENC Manager’s contract for the period 10-1-19 through 9-30-20.

In December, the Executive Board Chairman approved a contract modification extending the document control manager’s contract through 9-30-20.

During the quarter ending June 30, 2019, the NGENC Finance and Administrative subcommittee, through its chair, (the NGENC Treasurer) clarified with Amtrak Grants and FRA Grants that the NGENC would be eligible for a further no-cost extension beyond the current grant period end date of 9-30-2020.

In the quarter ending December 31, 2019, the FRA confirmed that a no-cost NGENC grant agreement extension can be for multiple years and has recommended that Amtrak (and the NGENC) make the formal request by July, 2019 to fit within the window for extension requests (July -September). The NGENC Executive Board agreed with the FASC recommendation that the grant agreement extension be for a 36-month period (10-1-2020 through 9-30-2023) and will formalized its request in January 2020.

In January 2020, Amtrak submitted the formal request (GARF) for a 36-month no-cost extension. It is currently in the review process at FRA with the intent being to approve/execute the agreement extension sometime in May 2020.

As of 6-30-20 – the FRA is reviewing the grant extension request with consideration of approval anticipated to occur soon.

As of this quarter, (ending 6-30-20) all NGEC subcontractor/consultant contracts are current.

On 9-16-20, the FASC Chairman announced that the FRA and Amtrak had approved and executed a 36 month – no cost NGEC grant agreement extension. This would extend the NGEC grant agreement through September 30, 2023. The scope and activities identified in the grant agreement remain the same and the work of the committee will continue as described there-in.

As of 9-30-20 – the subcontractor/consultant contracts are current. As of the end of business on 9-30-20, they will need to be extended coordinated with the 36-month extension. The first step in this process is for Amtrak and AASHTO to extend the AASHTO contract for the 36-month period. AASHTO would, in turn, extend the subcontractors contracts for the same period as per the motion adopted by the NGEC Executive Board on 6-6-2017 and per Chairman Ray Hessinger's instructions during the Executive Board web conference held on 9-22-20.

In October 2020, all contract extensions (Amtrak/AASHTO) and ASSHTO/Hewitt, AASHTO/Krause and AASHTO/Casamar) were executed and will run through 9-30-23.

As of 9-30-21, all contracts are up to date and active.

As of 12-31-21 all contracts are up to date and active.

As of 3-31-22 all contracts are up to date and active.

As of 6-30-22 all contracts are up to date and active.

As of 9-30-22 all contracts are up to date and active.

As of 12-31-22, all contracts are up to date and active.

As of 3-31-23, all contracts are up to date and active.

As of 6-30-23, all contracts are up to date and active.

As of 9-30-23, all contracts are up to date and active through this date. With the ending of the current grant agreement on 9-30-23, funding will need to be confirmed and Amtrak and AASHTO will need to extend its agreement and Amtrak will need to authorize AASHTO to modify/extend the contracts of the sub-contractors.

Review/Update of NGEC Specifications (Document Control):

This activity is ongoing:

Activities specific to this quarter:

During this quarter, the Bi-Level Specification Revision D was adopted by the NGEC Executive Board and is with the technical writer to be finalized.

In June 2023, the technical writing was completed and the final Revision D has been added to the PRIIA document list and is available by request from Steve Hewitt via shewitt109@aol.com

The working group on weight issues is close to completing its work – Jeff Gordon, FRA, and team leader of the group will prepare the final report and provide it to the Technical subcommittee – likely during the final quarter of FFY 2023.

The 2022 By-Law Revisions were adopted by the Executive Board and have been posted to the website. The 2023 Annual By-Laws review will be conducted in the fourth quarter 2023 and completed in the first quarter 2024.

The website refresh was completed is up and running at www.ngec.org. Updates and new information are submitted regularly by Steve Hewitt to AASHTO for posting.

A CRISI grant application (Amtrak as the applicant) for new funding for the NGEC was submitted to the FRA prior to the due date of 11-30-22 and has been uploaded by FRA. The application was submitted with enthusiasm expressed by states, Amtrak, associations including AASHTO, States for Passenger Rail Coalition, (SPRC), the Rail Passengers Association (RPA) and the manufacturing and supply industry through letters of support. As of this date (7-5-23) the grant award announcements are expected to come in the August-September time frame.

In the last quarter, the NGEC Executive Board accepted the Finance and Administrative subcommittee's recommendation to continue its activities – funding permitted and closely monitor expenses.

In June 2023, the Board agreed to continue its ongoing activities and to continue to pursue interim funding for the 12-month period beginning 10-1-2023.

In June 2023, Amtrak submitted a 6 month no-cost GARF to FRA which is now under review. The GARF extends the period of performance and allows the NGEC to draw down expenses in the grant until exhausted.

In June 2023, the FRA reviewed the Amtrak proposal to fund the ongoing work of the Committee out of its Annual Grant received through Appropriations for the 12-month period beginning on 10-1-2023 through 9-30-2024. The hope continues to be that the NGEC will be awarded a CRISI grant and that this interim funding will keep the NGEC going until CRISI funds can be obligated.

In the fourth quarter, the Bi-Level Specification Revision D, as adopted by the Board in June 2023, has been completed by the Technical Writer and it is available by request through NGEC Manager Steve Hewitt.

In September 2023, the Executive Board adopted Revision A of the PRIIA Reference Specification 305-901.

In September, administrative updates were also approved for the other series 900 reference specifications where applicable.