

SECTION 305 TECH SUB COMM

MINUTES

OCTOBER 26,
2023

3:00PM EASTERN

CONFERENCE CALL

FACILITATOR	<i>George Hull, Chair, NGENC Technical Subcommittee</i>
ATTENDEES	Core Team Members: <i>George Hull, Joe Paul, Jeff Gordon, Ryan Sharpe, Curtis McDowell, Ray Hessinger, Ed Engle, Art Peterson, Curt Massie, Mike Jenkins, Melissa Shurland, Dave Warner, Jennifer Bastian, Blair Slaughter, Larry Salci, Steve Hewitt</i> Industry Members: <i>Ed Golitko, Rich Bowie, Rich Stegner, Jack Madden, Kevin Myles, Josh Coran, Dick Bruss, Jeff Schultz, Ken Martin, Kevin Sudano, Steve Morrison, David Wilcock, James Michel, Brian Ley, Rob Magdule, Stephen Mark</i>
ABSENTEES	<i>Matthew Simmons, Troy Hughes, Tammy Krause, Mike Murray, Tarek Omar, Barley Fields</i>

DISCUSSION/DECISIONS MADE

1.

Technical subcommittee Chair George Hull, Amtrak, called the meeting to order and asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll of core team members.

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

As always, industry participants are asked to email a notification of their attendance to Steve Hewitt at shewitt109@aol.com.

2.

Review Action Items – Steve Hewitt, NGENC Program Manager:

2023 NGENC Backgrounder educational document:

The 2023 NGENC two-pager is available in hard copy by request of Steve Hewitt at shewitt109@aol.com.

To date 354 copies have been distributed.

The NGENC FASC has begun the process of reviewing and updating the NGENC two-pager for 2024. Some recommendations were made on 10-11-23 during the FASC meeting and further discussions will take place during the November meeting.

Maintaining Industry Participation List:

There are currently 205 industry participants.

Any updates or changes to this list should be sent to Steve Hewitt at shewitt109@aol.com.

CtDOT Rail car Procurement:

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.

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

Next Update: As Appropriate

Metro North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement:

Metro North and Siemens conducted a First Article Inspection for the energy storage cubicle, the switchgear-and 3rd rail cubicle, the

battery rack and 4 delta FAIs for changed cabinets on-site in Sacramento.

Metro North and Siemens agreed upon test values for a shock & vibration test for the 3rd rail current collector shoe mechanism.

MNR locomotive #301 is ready for low voltage cable tray installation (Q23) and is progressing in Final Assembly and MNR locomotive #302 is progressing per the DCS.

The FAI for the MNR traction converter was performed and the component was dispositioned as allowed to ship with minor open items.

Next Update: 11-9-23

Amtrak Vehicle Procurements:

On the new Acela – Continuing to work on qualification issues.

On the Charger Locomotives – 36 units are in service and progress continues to be on track.

On the Airo Trainset – Final Design Review is complete and progress is on track.

Next Update: 11-9-23

University of Nebraska/FRA High Speed Wireless Study as of 8-31-23:

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*

Next Update – 11-9-23

3. Approval of the Minutes from 10-12-23:

On a motion by Art Peterson, IDOT, and a second by, Ed Engle Iowa DOT, the minutes from the 10-12-23 meeting were approved as presented.

4. Update: Multi-State Venture Rail Car Procurement as of 10-26-23 – Ryan Sharpe, Caltrans:

Ryan Sharpe, Caltrans, provided the following update for inclusion in today's minutes:

The remaining Cab Car FDR items are in the closure stage with all subsystems approved and 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 maintainer safety training.

Next Update: 11-9-23

**7.
Document Control – Steve Hewitt for Tammy Krause:**

Tammy Krause was not available for this call (10-26-23), but sent the work plan and budgets for document control management and technical writing to Steve Hewitt in advance of the call. Steve Hewitt, in turn, distributed the documents to all voting members prior to the meeting, Steve Hewitt introduced the plan and George Hull asked if voting members had received the documents and had a chance to review them. George added that he had reviewed the plan and the corresponding documents and was in support.

He asked if there were any comments or input from members. Hearing none, George Hull called for a motion to adopt the work plan as presented.

On a motion by Art Peterson, IDOT and a second by Ed Engle, Iowa DOT, and with no objections forthcoming, George Hull determined that consensus was achieved and the Technical Subcommittee's Document Control Work Plan was approved as presented.

Steve Hewitt will send the work plan as approved to the NGEN Executive Board in advance of their next meeting (10-31-23).

Below, is the work plan as approved. The associated budgets (previously approved by the Executive Board were distributed in advance of this meeting and support the work plan.

Technical Sub Committee Proposed Work Plan for FFY 2024:

1. *Updating the Dual Mode Locomotive Specification (305-11)*
 - *Request DCRs by 1/4/24*
 - *Submit DCRs to the Propulsion WG by 1/18/24.*
 - *Propulsion Group review the DCRs and return by 2/29/24.*
 - *Submit to the Entire TSC 3/14/24 with comments due 3/28/24.*
 - *Review with the TSC 4/11/24*
 - *Vote on the acceptance of the proposed changes 4/25/24*
 - *Submit to the EB 4/25/24.*
2. *Updating the Single Level Car Specification (305-003)*
 - *Request DCRs by 2/1/23*
 - *Submit DCRs to the appropriate WGs by 2/15/24.*
 - *WGs to review the DCRs and return by 4/11/24.*
 - *Submit to the entire TSC 4/25/24 with comments due 5/9/24.*
 - *Review with the TSC 5/23/24*
 - *Vote on the acceptance of the proposed changes 6/6/24*
 - *Submit to the EB 6/6/24.*
3. *Continue De-Amtrakting the PRIIA Subspecifications*
 - *Complete the changes at a rate of 1 Subspecification every 3 weeks.*

In her submittal, Tammy included the following comments:

The specification reviews are starting now. I will continue to mention this at each TSC call.

This is the first time we will be working on two specifications at a time.

7.

Status/Update/Timeline – Working Group on Weight Issues – Jeff Gordon, FRA:

Jeff Gordon, FRA, reported that he is looking to set a meeting of the working group for 11-9-23 from noon to 1:00pm Eastern. He asked that anyone not on his list, but interested in participating on the working group to contact him at jeffrey.gordon@dot.gov.

Jeff added that he is planning to have another meeting in December which “maybe” will finalize the document for submittal to the Technical Subcommittee for further action.

At this point, Jeff informed the Technical Subcommittee members on today’s call that he will be retiring from FRA at the end of December 2023 after 39 years.

Jeff announced that upon his retirement the following FRA representatives will fill his NGEC roles in an interim capacity:

Mike Murray will serve as FRA’s voting member of the NGEC Executive Board and the Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC). Melissa Shurland will serve as the voting member of the Technical Subcommittee and as team leader for the Mechanical working group.

Jeff also noted that he is hoping at the November meeting of the Working Group on Weight Issues to poll the members to get a team leader in place in case the work is not completed in November.

After hearing the news of Jeff’s retirement from FRA, Ray Hessinger (NGEC Exec Board Chair) congratulated Jeff and expressed his appreciation for the work Jeff has done with the Committee and with the states throughout the years.

Steve Hewitt also offered his congratulations and thanked him for all that he did for the NGEC since its inception. Steve noted that Jeff was always “the voice of reason” for the NGEC and such a strong contributor and an invaluable member of the Committee that he will be impossible to replace.

George Hull weighed in as well with his congratulations and commented on what Jeff meant to FRA and to all those he worked with. George added “you will be missed”.

8.

Follow-up: Question of changing the web-conference service provider from WebEx to Teams – Steve Hewitt:

Steve Hewitt reported that he had heard two comments on the question of preference of a webconference service provider – either stay with WebEx or change to Microsoft Teams. Both comments stated an inclination to stay with WebEx.

Steve asked if there were any further comments/thoughts/opinions?

Steve did note that FRA – Mike Murray – had recommended to the Executive Board that the NGEC begin using Microsoft Teams rather than WebEx. Mike and others have had difficulties with WebEx.

George Hull asked if members had comments. Hearing none, he noted that he and others at Amtrak have problems with WebEx as well and he would like to see the NGEC switch to Teams.

Steve Hewitt agreed that there were issues with WebEx for some and today was a prime example of those problems as several members had difficulties getting on this call or staying connected.

George asked what the next steps are. Steve said that it is a Board decision and suggested that George add his concerns to those of FRA at next week’s Exec Board call (10-31-23) and inform Board members that the question was brought to the Technical Subcommittee and there did not appear to be any concerns with moving to Teams.

9.

NGEC Annual Meeting – Steve Hewitt:

Steve Hewitt reminded members that the NGEC Annual meeting will be held on 2-2-24 at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill Washington, DC.

A DRAFT agenda has been prepared and will be discussed on the next Executive Board meeting scheduled for 10-31-23. The

plan is to hold the meeting as a hybrid – in-person and virtually. The time is anticipated to be registration at 8:00am Eastern with the meeting kicking off at 8:30AM and ending around 12:30PM Eastern.

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

Room Rate: \$193 per night plus tax

Hotel Link: [AASHTO 2024 Council on Rail Transportation Legislative Meeting \(hyatt.com\)](https://www.hyatt.com/en/usa/meetings-events/aashto-2024-council-on-rail-transportation-legislative-meeting)

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

10.

Other/Adjourn – George Hull, Amtrak:

Steve Hewitt mentioned that the Technical Subcommittee will meet only once in November – on the 9th – due to the Thanksgiving holiday. He added that the November meeting should have a “packed” agenda.

With no other business forthcoming, George Hull adjourned today's meeting at 3:26PM

Next meeting – 11-9-23

Reminder: There will be only one meeting in November as the next one would land on Thanksgiving Day

Decisions and Ongoing Action Items

2023 NGEC Backgrounder educational document:

The 2023 NGEC two-pager is available in hard copy or electronic copy. Send requests to Steve Hewitt at shewitt109@aol.com

To date 354 copies have been distributed.

It is also posted on the NGEC website – www.ngec.org

The FASC is beginning its review of the 2023 version and preparing to update it for 2024. It is anticipated that the 2024 version will be ready for distribution at the NGEC Annual Meeting on 2-2-24.

Maintaining Industry Participation List:

There are 205 industry participants.

Any updates or changes to this list should be sent to Steve Hewitt at shewitt109@aol.com.

Update: Multi-State Railcar Procurement as of 10-26 -23:

The remaining Cab Car FDR items are in the closure stage with all subsystems approved and 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.

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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 maintainer safety training.

Next Update: 11-9-23

Document Control as of 10-26-23:

On 10-26-23, the Technical Subcommittee adopted the proposed work plan for 2024 as submitted by Tammy Krause, Document Control Manager,

The work plan will be presented to the Executive Board on 10-31-23 as information.

Working Group on Weight Issues:

Jeff Gordon, FRA, reported that he is looking to set a meeting of the working group for 11-9-23 from noon to 1:00pm Eastern. He asked that anyone not on his list , but interested in participating on the working group to contact him at jeffrey.gordon@dot.gov.

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Next Update – 11-9-23

Metro North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement as of 10-12-23-23:

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Next Update: 11-9-23

NGEC 12-month Interim funding provided by Amtrak:

On the 10-11-23 FASC call Treasurer Tim Ziethen told members that the Amtrak Board had approved the NGEC 123-month interim funding plan and budget (\$260,000) as a line item in the AOP.

Steve Hewitt asked about the status of authorizing AASHTO to extend the contracts of the sub-contractors.

Tim specifically asked Steve to **“put it in the (FASC) minutes that it is authorized and approved – AASHTO can extend the sub-contractors contracts for another year”**.

Steve agreed to put it in the minutes (and has) but added that since no one from AASHTO was on the call on 10-11-23, it is still necessary to send the authorization directly to AASHTO (Strat Cavros).

Tim agreed and will be sure that authorization is provided. The only language caveat that is still being worked out with Amtrak Legal is related to the fact that Amtrak is still operating under a Continuing Resolution (CR) and the final appropriation for 2024 has not yet been enacted. This will only create an issue if Congress's action has a major negative impact in the ultimate budget.

Tim concluded the discussion on this topic emphasizing that it has been confirmed internally within Amtrak.

On 10-12-23, George Hull confirmed that this was his understanding as well.

CRISI Grant Awards Timeline:

Awards announced week of 9-25-23 – NGEC did not receive a CRISI Grant

Requesting a Debrief with FRA:

On the 10-3-23 NGEC Executive Board call, Chairman Ray Hessinger asked that Amtrak request a debrief with FRA on the CRISI Grant on what worked, what didn't, and that he and NGEC Secretary John Oimoen, IDOT be invited to participate.

10-26-23: No change in this item. Work is proceeding for FFY 2024.

Balance/Spend Rate Through August 2023 (preliminary) per Tim Ziethen, NGEC Treasurer 10-11-23:

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.
Expenses Incurred through August 2023: \$1,249,836.37.
Balance remaining: \$163.63.
Estimated spending, at current rate, for balance of the Grant: \$15,058.27
Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$15,058.27.
Estimated Balance at the end of the Grant Period: (\$14,894.64) over target.

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

Tim Ziethen, as of 10-11-23, had not received confirmation from the Amtrak Grants office that this extension has been finalized and executed.

Mike Murray, FRA, reported to the Finance and Administrative sub-committee (FASC) that his understanding several weeks ago was that it was accepted by Amtrak in Grants Solutions.

Tim Ziethen will check with the Grants office and added that he is certain it will be executed if it has not been already.

Steve Hewitt noted that AASHTO will still need to be told that they are ok to pay invoices coming in from sub-contractors for work performed in September 2023.

Tim Ziethen will inform AASHTO that it is ok to pay.

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

On 10-11-23, Steve Hewitt asked Tim Ziethen if he had determined what close-out documents would be required. Tim stated that he is still waiting to hear from the Amtrak Grants office on this. He added that his assumption is that as long as the 6-month no-cost extension is in place, the quarterly reports should be provided for the prior grant. He will get confirmation from the Grants office on what else needs to be done to close out the grant.

10-26-23: Nothing new to report on these items.

Scheduling Meetings/changing Web/conference providers:

Steve Hewitt reported that he has rescheduled all NGEN meetings through Outlook Calendar appointments for the next 12 months. The Technical Subcommittee calls remain bi-weekly with George Hull and Steve Hewitt being given the responsibility of determining whether to hold or cancel a given call based on the proposed agenda. If it is deemed to be light, the meeting will be canceled.

The FRA raised the issue of changing the service provider for web-conference meetings from WebEx to TEAMS. The FASC members recommended that this issue be brought to the Executive Board, AASHTO and the Technical Subcommittee to get a sense of preference.

Members of the tech subcommittee (including industry members) are asked to send any thoughts or comments or preferences to Steve Hewitt and George Hull.

Comments will help inform the discussion with the Executive Board on its November meeting.

10-26-23: With no notable objections the George Hull will report to the Executive Board on 10-31-23, that his (and Amtrak's members) agree with FRA that TEAMS is the preferred service.

NGEC 2024 Annual Meeting:

The NGEN 2024 Annual Meeting will take place on 2-2-24 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Capitol Hill, Washington, DC
A DRAFT agenda is being developed and will be discussed on the November meeting of the Executive Board.

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

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Cut-Off Date: January 5, 2024

Kamasha Hendrickson, CMP, CGMP

Senior Meeting Planner
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Next Meeting – 11-9-23

ATTACHMENTS



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

PRIIA Section 305 Tech Sub Committee Meeting

Web Ex video/audio information:

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

by phone: 1-415-655-0001

Access code: 126-073-1531

Agenda

10-26-23

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 2. Review Action Items | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approve Minutes from 10-12-23 | George Hull |
| 4. Update: Multi-State Venture Rail Car Procurement | Ryan Sharpe |
| 5. Document Control Update | Steve Hewitt for Tammy Krause |
| - Status – Finalizing 305-901 as adopted. | |
| - Present/review – work plan and timeline for 2023-24 | |
| - Review Technical Working Group members/team leaders – vacancies. | |
| 6. Consider Approval of Tech Subcommittee Document Control Work Plan for 2023-24 | George Hull |
| 7. Status Update/Timeline – Working Group on Weight Issues | Jeff Gordon |
| 8. Follow-up: question of changing the web-conference service provider from WebEx to TEAMS. - | Steve Hewitt |
| 9. Annual Meeting 2024 | Steve Hewitt |

10. Adjourn

George Hull

Next Meeting
11-9-23