

SECTION 305 TECH SUB COMM

MINUTES

AUGUST 17, 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, Art Peterson, Ed Engle, Marci Petterson, Ray Hessinger, Troy Hughes, Curt Massie, Mike Jenkins, Curtis McDowell, Larry Salci, Tammy Krause, Jodi Lehmkuhl, Blair Slaughter, Steve Hewitt</i> Industry Members: <i>Richard Stegner, Jack Madden, Kevin Sudano, James Michel, Ed Golitko, Frank Pascazio, Dave Warner, Rob Magdule, Paul Jamieson, Joanna Hallisy, Dick Bruss, Steve Ojalvo, Marcin Taraszkiwicz</i>
ABSENTEES	<i>Matthew Simmons, Mike Murray, Tarek Omar, Melissa Shurland, 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 338 copies have been distributed.

Maintaining Industry Participation List:

There are currently 204 industry participants. (three new members joined since the last technical subcommittee meeting)

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

Next Update: As Appropriate

Working Group on Vehicle Weight Issues:

On 3-30-23, Jeff Gordon, FRA reported 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.

Steve Hewitt asked Jeff to let him know when he is ready to present an update to the technical subcommittee and he will add it to the agenda at that time.

Next Update: As Appropriate

University of Nebraska High Speed Wireless Study as of 6-22-23:

We continued our field testing for verification of our transceiver design. This is to investigate a better utilization of some of the sub-giga-Hertz frequencies for rail applications to ease the spectrum saturation. We have been investigating 160 MHz which has been used primarily for voice communications but believe this band can be utilized more efficiently for some of the

data rail applications and this is the core of our study. We have built computer models for the physical layer transmission of 160 MHz as well as the upper layers to simulate and field test different rail applications. Our developed transceiver has been implemented using software-defined radios for field tests. Hope to provide the results later in the summer.

For questions or additional information, contact Hamid Sharif at: hsharif@UNL.edu

Next Update: 8-31-23

3. Approval of the Minutes from 7-20-23 – George Hull, Amtrak:

On a motion by Ed Engle, Iowa DOT, and a second by Art Peterson for IDOT, the minutes from 7-20-23 were approved as submitted.

4. Update: Multi-State Venture Rail Car Procurement –Ryan Sharpe, Caltrans:

On 8-17-23, Ryan Sharpe, Caltrans, provided the following update for inclusion in the meeting minutes:

The remaining Cab Car FDR submittals are in the final closure stage with nearly all subsystems approved. The Cab Car MCAT simulation report has been submitted to FRA via Amtrak additional clarifications provided. IDOT Café Car system level FDR reviews are nearly closed and the requested MCAT simulation is in work.

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.

131 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 2023 pending completion of final agreements.

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

On 8-17-23, Ray Hessinger provided the following update:

Production of Locomotives #301 and 302 remain on schedule – car shells are completed.

CtDOT executed their option for additional locomotives.

FAIs for an alluminum roof were approved.

Siemens is working with Metro-North on delay issues.

Upcoming work includes scheduling of additional of FAIs.

6. Update: CtDOT Rail car Procurement – Marci Petterson, CtDOT:

Marci Petterson, CtDOT, provided the following update for inclusion in the 8-17-23 meeting minutes:

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.

In concluding her update, Marci thanked the NGEC for the use of the NGEC Specification as a base spec in this procurement.

Congratulations on this great news!

7. Update: Amtrak Vehicle Procurements – George Hull, Amtrak:

On 8-17-23 George Hull provided the following update:

On the new Acela – Work continues on qualification items. Trainset #8 should be in by the end of the month.

On the Charger Locomotives – There are forty units thus far with thirty units in service. Overall, it's going very well.

On the Airo Trainset – the first car shell is almost complete and Final Design Review (FDR) and FAIs continue.

On the Long -Distance Procurement – they are in the second round of RFI and working toward an RFP by the end of the year.

8.

Update: Document Control – Tammy Krause:

Tammy Krause reported on the following:

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.

Review/Discuss/consider updates to PRIIA sub-spec 305-901:

Members of the Technical subcommittee received the draft "re-write" of 305-901 approximately 6 weeks ago. On the last call – 7-20-23 – most members had not had a chance to review it. All were given another 4 weeks to do so and to provide comments. Tammy reported that she had not received any comments.

Tammy shared her screen and walked through the changes being recommended. She skipped over formatting changes which are simply administrative and moved through the content.

George Hull suggested that she scroll to each DCR proposed and ask if there are any comments from those on the call today.

Ray Hessinger pointed out a few inconsistencies where the reference to Amtrak is still in the document and should be removed. Tammy will make those corrections.

9.

Consideration of Approval of DCRs for the series 900 Reference sub-spec 305-901 – George Hull:

After some discussion and "no content issues" raised, George Hull recommended that Tammy "clean-up" the Amtrak identification issues and present the document again as a clean version before a vote is taken.

Asked about the process, Steve Hewitt agreed that this item should be tabled for today, and asked that Tammy have the clean version ready in advance of the next call (8-31-23) with ample time for members to review it and the subcommittee can vote in consideration of approval on that call and, if approved, send it on to the Executive Board for its review and consideration.

10.

Update: NGEC 12 month interim funding – Steve Hewitt:

Steve Hewitt reported that, on the 7-25-23 Executive Board Meeting the Board went into Executive session to discuss the proposed budget for a 12-month interim funding plan for the NGEC to be funded out of the Amtrak Operating Plan (AOP). During that meeting the budget was approved for approximately \$260,000.

On the 8-8-23 Executive Board call, the Board received clarification that even if the 2024 Appropriations has not been approved and there is a CR – Amtrak will still fund the 12-month interim NGEC plan. This was confirmed by Amtrak CMO George Hull. Thank you, George!

The hope remains that the NGEC will be awarded a CRISI Grant which it applied for. This would provide long-term funding and a more in-depth work plan that would allow the NGEC to continue maintain current specs and look into new technologies, develop new specifications and fully address the updating of the current specs based on changes made by entities that have used those specs (a project that will begin with the interim funding plan).

Steve asked George Hull if he had missed anything or if he had anything to add. George replied that he had nothing to add

and that Steve Hewitt had captured it correctly.

CRISI Grant Awards Timeline:

Timeframe: Announcement of CRISI Grant Awards: August-September 2023

Timeframe for receiving funds if awarded a Grant – about 6 months.

11.

Discussion: Meeting Cadence – change frequency? – George Hull:

George Hull reported that at the 7-25-23 Executive Board Executive session, the issue of the cadence of NGECE meetings by the subcommittees and the Executive Board was raised. It was agreed the the Board and the two subcommittees would take some time on their next call to discuss whether therethe frequency of the meetings should be reduced.

On 8-8-23 the NGECE Executive Board agreed to change its meeting cadence from bi-weekly to one every four weeks.

Today, 8-17-23, George Hull recommended that the Technical subcommittee follow suit and make its cadence every four weeks or monthly rather than bi-weekly.

George opened the floor for discussion:

Dave Warner, NGECE Emeritus member and industry member, weighed in stating that he “strongly disagreed with the proposal to shift Tech Sub Committee meetings to monthly. While the Exec Board has made that schedule reduction decision—one I also disagree with—that body doesn’t do the significant detailed work the TSC does.”

Dave added that “Creating and maintaining our vehicle specifications is the heart and soul of the NGECE. That effort requires more joint discussion that just monthly. Indeed, we’re about to embark on an effort to have the technical working groups coordinate with about half a dozen different agencies and railroads which have used our specifications to obtain ideas for specification updates. This effort has been a priority of our Executive Director for well over a year. It is important we come together every two weeks to discuss progress, or there won’t be much progress.”

Dave expressed concern with the fact that, at times there are delays in getting proposed change approved in a timely manner, “when people haven’t reviewed items within the requested time frames. At present, the resulting delay until the next meeting is only two weeks. If we go to monthly meetings, a similar delay would be an entire month, and what should have taken two weeks would end up taking two months. Do you really want to bog down the working of the TSC?”

Dave added that there is minimal cost involved to have the meetings bi-weekly as most of the work is done voluntarily, so the NGECE’s limited funding situation should not be a factor.

Dave also expressed concern, which was also raised on 8-8-23 by Steve Hewitt, that once a meeting is taken off a calendar, it is exceedingly difficult to get it back on calendars.

“Consequently, Dave stated, “I recommend voting against this proposal. Instead, keep the meetings every two weeks until we get our new funding, wherever it comes from. In the meantime, if there isn’t sufficient business to discuss, Steve Hewitt and the TSC Chairman can discuss cancelling a meeting. Doing this can achieve a temporary reduction of meeting frequencies while not permanently disrupting the flow of TSC work.”

Jeff Gordon, FRA commented that the initial work on reviewing and distilling changes made to PRIIA specs used by various entities will be done by the Document Control Manager and the Technical Writer. He asked if he was correct on this. Steve Hewitt confirmed that he is correct, the initial work will be done by Tammy and Cameron and each had submitted a proposal to the Executive Board as to what those costs will be. Their budgets were approved by the Board as a part of the work plan/budget for the 12-month interim NGECE funding program.

With that being the case, Jeff believes that on most bi-weekly meetings there is not a lot of news to report. The updates on the procurements do not change much in two weeks. The meetings begin to get stale when held on a bi-weekly basis. Jeff noted that he understood Dave Warner’s very well-thought-out concerns and he can understand the issue of once a meeting is off the calendar its hard to get back on because that time slot is filled quickly.

After some additional comments from Dave Warner and Jeff Gordon, the idea was raised to leave the bi-weekly calls on the calendars and let Steve Hewitt and George Hull make the decision to cancel on the Tuesday or Wednesday prior to the next call if they believe there is not enough “meat on the bones” of the agenda to make it a productive agenda.

George Hull asked if there was a motion to change the meeting cadence.

With no motion forthcoming, no formal action was required.

Ultimately, the consensus was to keep on the bi-weekly schedule with Steve Hewitt and George Hull deciding by the Tuesday or Wednesday before the meeting to hold it or cancel it based on what the agenda would be comprised of.

It was also agreed that the August 31st call will take place as long as the 305-901 draft revisions are addressed in a clean version of the document in time for the subcommittee to review it and consider its approval. Completing the subcommittee approval process allows it to go forward for the Executive Board's consideration on its next call which will take place on 9-5-23.

**12.
Other/Adjourn – George Hull:**

With no other business forthcoming, George Hull adjourned today's Technical Subcommittee meeting at 3:50pm.

Next meeting – 8-31-23

Decisions and Ongoing Action Items

2023 NGEC Backgrounder educational document:

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

Maintaining Industry Participation List:

There are just over two hundred industry participants (203).

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

Update: Multi-State Railcar Procurement as of 8-8-23:

The remaining Cab Car FDR submittals are in the final closure stage with nearly all subsystems approved. The Cab Car MCAT simulation report has been submitted to FRA via Amtrak additional clarifications provided. IDOT Café Car system level FDR reviews are nearly closed and the requested MCAT simulation is in work.

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Next Update – 8-31-23

Document Control Management as of 8-17-23:

Tammy Krause provided the following update on 7-20-23:

It was agreed that comments to the changes to 305-901 (identified as DCRs 305-005 through 305-016) will be incorporated into a clean version for subcommittee review and consideration on 8-31-23. Also incorporated will be the removal of Amtrak references consistent with the 8-17-23 discussion.

Next Update – 8-31-23

Working Group on Weight Issues:

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Next Update – 8-31-23**Metro North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement as of 8-17-23:**

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Next Meeting – 8-31-23

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

8-17-23

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| 1. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 2. Review Action Items | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approve Minutes from 7-20-23 | George Hull |

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| 4. Update: Multi-State Venture Rail Car Procurement | Ryan Sharpe |
| 5. Update: Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement | Ray Hessinger |
| 6. Update: CtDOT Rail Car Procurement | Marci Petterson |
| 7. Update: Amtrak Vehicle Procurements | George Hull |
| 8. Update: Document Control | Tammy Krause |
| - Status – Communications on Rail Cars Working Group Activities | |
| - Status – Carbody Materials Working Group Activities | |
| - Review/discuss/consider updates to PRIIA Reference sub-spec 305-901 | |
| 9. Consideration of approval of DCRs for the series 900 sub-specs as discussed on 7-6-23 | George Hull |
| 10. Status: NGEN 12-month Interim Funding | Steve Hewitt |
| 11. Discussion: Meeting Cadence - change frequency? | George Hull |
| 12. Adjourn | George Hull |

Next Meeting 8-31-23