

SECTION 305 TECH SUB COMM

MINUTES

SEPT. 14, 2023

3:00PM EASTERN

CONFERENCE CALL

FACILITATOR	<i>Joe Paul, Vice Chair, NGENC Technical Subcommittee</i>
ATTENDEES	Core Team Members: Joe Paul for George Hull, Jeff Gordon, Art Peterson, Curt Massie, Curtis McDowell, Dave Warner, Larry Salci, Steve Hewitt Industry Members: Kevin Sudano, Ed Golitko, Frank Pascazio, Steve Ojalvo, Rich Bowie, Tom LaMano, Rich Stegner, Jack Madden, Paul Arnone, Jonathan Michel
ABSENTEES	<i>Matthew Simmons, Ray Hessinger, Mike Jenkins, Ed Engle, Marci Petterson, Troy Hughes, Ryan Sharpe, Mike Murray, Tarek Omar, Melissa Shurland, Jodi Lehmkuhl, Tammy Krause, Blair Slaughter, 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 could not confirm the presence of a quorum. It was agreed that the meeting would be held, but no decisions would be made and/or no votes would be taken.

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 352 copies have been distributed.

Maintaining Industry Participation List:

There are currently 204 industry participants.

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

CtDOT Rail car Procurement:

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.

Next Update: As Appropriate

Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement:

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.

As of 9-14-23 Ray Hessinger had not received a report from Metro-North for August – Ray informed Steve Hewitt that there are many FAI's taking place but he has not received a full report.

Next Update: 10-12-23

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 – As Appropriate

3. Approval of the Minutes from 8-31-23:

Due to the lack of a quorum, this item was tabled.

4. Update: Multi-State Venture Rail Car Procurement as of 9-14-23:

With no representation from Caltrans during this meeting, this item was tabled until the next meeting.

5. Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement:

As of 9-14-23, Ray Hessinger had not received a report from Metro-North for August – Ray informed Steve Hewitt that there are many FAI's taking place but he has not received a full report.

This item is tabled until the next call.

Next Update: 10-12-23

**6.
Amtrak Vehicle Procurements:**

On 9-14-23 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 o3 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.

Next Update: 10-12-23

**7.
Document Control – Dave Warner for Tammy Krause:**

On 9-14-23, Dave Warner reported that on 9-5-23, the NGEN 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.

8.

Status – 12-month NGEN Interim Funding/current Grant Agreement Balance/Related items – Steve Hewitt:

Steve Hewitt provided an update on the status of several pending items as discussed and reported on during the NGEN Finance and Administrative Subcommittee on 9-13-23:

Treasurer's Update- Balance and Spend Rate – Forecast provided by NGEN Treasurer - Tim Ziethen, Amtrak, on 9-13-23:

Balance/Spend Rate including invoices 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.

Overall, Tim told the FASC that he 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 9-13-23, Amtrak has not yet received the final word from FRA on the no-cost current grant agreement extension which would allow NGEN expenses incurred during the grant period to be paid beyond the 9-30-23 performance period.

Tim Ziethen reported to the FASC that he 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 Ziethen will have more information from Amtrak Grants and Legal as to what is needed and what the process will be for final closeout of the current grant.

Status -NGEC 12-month Interim funding next steps:

On 9-13-23, Tim Ziethen also noted 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.

As reported previously, 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 to the FASC that he has asked Amtrak Grants and Amtrak Legal what Amtrak is authorized to do with respect to 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 to the FASC and the Executive Board is not to shut down any of the NGEC work or activities. 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 (sub-contractor contracts) after 9-30-23.

Based on these recommendations, work will continue per usual until otherwise informed.

9. Next Meeting – Steve Hewitt:

Steve Hewitt reported that the 9-28-23 call has been canceled. The next meeting will take place on 10-12-23 following the Executive Board’s meeting on 10-3-23.

In the meantime, assuming that there will be at least 12-months interim funding, Steve Hewitt will send out new calendar appointments for Bi-weekly calls beginning on 10-12-23 and ending by 9-30-24.

As previously agreed, Steve Hewitt and George Hull will cancel meetings periodically over the next 12 months whenever they feel the agenda is particularly light for an upcoming meeting.

10. Adjourn – Joe Paul, Amtrak:

With no other business forthcoming, Joe Paul adjourned today’s meeting at 3:24pm.

Next meeting – 10-12-23

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 352 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 just over two hundred industry participants (204).

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

Update: Multi-State Railcar Procurement as of 8-31-23:

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 with additional clarifications provided. IDOT Café Car system level FDR reviews are complete and the requested MCAT simulations are in review for submittal.

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.

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 2023 pending completion of final agreements.

On 9-14-23 – Caltrans was not present and there was no update provided.

Next Update – 10-12-23

Document Control Management as of 9-14-23:

On 9-14-23, Dave Warner reported that on 9-5-23, the NGEN 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.

Next Update – 10-12-23

Working Group on Weight Issues:

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*Hamid Sharif
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There was no report provided on 9-14-23.

Next Update – 10-12-23

Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement:

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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.

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

On the Long -Distance Procurement – as of 8-31-23, they were in the second round of RFI and working toward an RFP by the end of the year. (nothing new reported on 9-14-23 on this procurement)

Next Update: 10-12-23.

NGEC 12 month interim funding:

As reported by Steve Hewitt in summarizing the update given to the FASC by Treasurer Tim Ziethen on 9-13-23:

As reported previously, 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.

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CRISI Grant Awards Timeline:

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

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

No Change in status as of 9-14-23

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Meeting Calendar:

Beginning with the 10-3-23 Executive Board meeting, Steve Hewitt will re-start the NGEC calendars for 12 months. The legacy calendar goes on infinitely and has some old information. Steve Hewitt will stop the recurring meetings at the end of this month and send new calendar appointments beginning in October 2023.

On 8-17-23, the subcommittee agreed to remain with bi-weekly calls with George Hull and Steve Hewitt determining whether a meeting is to be canceled if there is a light agenda.

On 9-14-23, it was determined that the 9-28-23 Tech SC meeting will be canceled and the new rotation of bi-weekly meetings will begin on 10-12-23.

NGEC 2024 Annual Meeting:

The NGEC 2024 Annual Meeting will take place on 2-2-24 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Capitol Hill, Washington, DC
Details will be forthcoming.

Next Meeting – 10-12-23

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://stephenhewittconsulting.my.webex.com/meet/shewitt109>

by phone: 1-415-655-0001

Access code: 126-073-1531

Agenda

9-14-23

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|---|---------------|
| 1. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 2. Review Action Items | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approve Minutes from 8-31-23 | Joe Paul |
| 4. Update: Multi-State Venture Rail Car Procurement | Ryan Sharpe |
| 5. Update: Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement | Ray Hessinger |
| 6. Update: Amtrak Vehicle Procurements | Joe Paukl |
| 7. Document Control Update | Dave Warner |
| - Status – Communications on Rail Cars Working Group Activities | |
| - Status – Carbody Materials Working Group Activities | |
| - Status - Exec Board Review/approval PRIIA Reference Spec 305-901 Revision A | |
| 8. Status – 12 Month NGEC Interim Funding | Steve Hewitt |
| 9. Next Meeting | Steve Hewitt |
| 10. Adjourn | Joe Paul |

Next Meeting

10-12-23