

SECTION 305 FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES

JANUARY 3, 2024

3:00PM EASTERN

WEBEX MEETING

FACILITATOR	<i>Tim Ziethen, Chair of the S305 Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)</i>
ATTENDEES	<i>Tim Ziethen, Brian Beeler II, Amanda Martin, Amanda Villani, Melina Lopez, Mike Murray, Ray Hessinger, Steve Hewitt, Barley Fields</i>
ABSENTEES	<i>Troy Hughes, Larry Salci, Shayne Gill, Strat Cavros,</i>

DECISIONS MADE

1. Welcome and Open Meeting – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak:

FASC Chair Tim Ziethen opened the meeting and asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll.

2. Roll Call – Steve Hewitt:

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

Steve Hewitt welcomed Melina Perez, IDOT, who will be taking John Oimoen’s spot on the FASC and the Executive Board now that John has retired from state service.

3. Approval of Minutes from the 11-8-23 meeting – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak

On a motion by, and a second by, the minutes from 11-8-23 were approved as submitted.

4. Treasurer’s Update- Balance and Spend Rate – Forecast – Tim Ziethen:

Balance/Spend Rate Through September 2023 – end of prior Grant:

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.
 Expenses incurred through September 2023: \$1,257,530.66
 Balance remaining: (\$7,530.66).
 Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$15,150.97.
 Estimated Balance at the end of the Grant Period: (\$7,530.66).

Tim Ziethen reported that he has received an AASHTO invoice for October in the amount of \$22,845.27. He is continuing to track the interim or gap funding provided by Amtrak as a part of the prior grant with the addition of the approved budgeted amount of \$260,000 for FY 24. This money can be spent until exhausted. At a current spend-rate of \$15,000 per month there should be a positive balance against the budget of about \$63,000. This will include reimbursing Amtrak for the overage from the prior grant. This would give the NGEC funding beyond the 12-month period ending on 9-30-24 and allow some additional time for potential long-term funding to be implemented.

Status: Amtrak/AASHTO and AASHTO/Sub-Contractor Extensions:

There is a discrepancy in the that Amtrak believes there is and what AASHTO shows. Amtrak purchasing has been working with AASHTO to alleviate the discrepancy and has sent a Purchase Order to AASHTO to execute. Tim will follow-up with Strat Cavros of AASHTO to be sure the discrepancy is resolved. (Amtrak believes there is more of a balance than AASHTO believes). To date, the sub-contractor modifications have not been executed. Tim will check in on this as well with Strat to be sure the understanding of the grants gets calibrated.

Tim added “we are in good shape and have an active Purchase Order. There is just housekeeping that needs to be resolved.” Tim will follow-up with Strat

Clarifying Casamar Invoice FY23 overage:

Steve Hewitt reminded Tim of the slight discrepancy in the Casamar invoice for the end of the prior performance period than what it had submitted previously and AASHTO is looking for an ok to pay. Steve Hewitt asked Tammy Krause to get clarification from Casamar.

Time will follow-up with Tammy and with Ray Hessinger and AASHTO to get this final invoice clarified and paid.

5.

Discussion – future funding options – Tim Ziethen:

Tim Ziethen noted that, although Amtrak's CRISI application for the NGEC was not awarded, the FRA, in the debrief with Amtrak, provided positive feedback on the application. It was thorough, there were no defects noted. In fact, the FRA complimented Amtrak on the quality of the application. It simply came down to too many requests for too little total funds available. Amtrak has been encouraged to submit a new application in response to the next CRISI Grant NOFO when it comes out. Amtrak intends to apply again and will work with the NGEC to update the application and to request industry letters in support again. The industry weighed in in a positive and impressive manner during the last round and that was noted by the FRA>

Tim is optimistic that the effort can turn out favorably but commented that it remains important that other potential options are looked at. To date, no other funding model has proven to be without challenges. Tim will follow-up with Amtrak Government Affairs and others to see if they are aware of any other possible avenues to pursue.

He reiterated that the current budget should allow for funding beyond FY24 and will allow the NGEC to continue to work until the funds are exhausted or another option is in place.

6.

Status – Two-Pager update for 2024 – Steve Hewitt:

Steve Hewitt reported that he is still getting numbers finalized. Awaiting an answer from Joe Paul on the total number of Chargers in service and confirming the number of Venture cars in service (68).

Melina Perez, IDOT informed Steve that the Venture Cars number has increased to 70.

Once these have been clarified, Ray Hessinger and Steve will determine which pictures should go to Laura Seabaugh for her to format into the new version. Steve added that he is waiting for a better interior photo from IDOT that John Oimoen had planned to send to Steve. Melina Perez noted that she will send an interior photo to Steve following this call.

7.

Review DRAFT FASC presentation for the 2024 Annual Meeting – Tim Ziethen:

Tim Ziethen walked through the FASC Annual Meeting Presentation and noted that Steve Hewitt had reviewed it and made a few additions to it.

Members of the FASC generally approved of the proposed presentation. Tim will finalize it and get it to Steve Hewitt who will insert it on an updated PowerPoint template being developed by AASHTO.

8.

Appointing a second vice chair – Tim Ziethen:

Steve Hewitt walked through the process for appointing a second vice chair for the FASC. The position is vacant as a result of the retirement of John Oimoen. State members of the FASC are asked to think about their potential interest in taking on this responsibility and to let Steve Hewitt or Tim Ziethen know of their interest. The responsibilities are minimal – primarily to assist Steve Hewitt each year in reviewing the By-Laws and the two-pager each year and providing any recommendations for changes to the FASC. The second vice chair would also chair a FASC meeting in the absence of the chair and first vice chair.

The subcommittee will not meet again prior to the Annual Meeting, so Steve Hewitt recommends that this issue be raised again at the 1-23-24 Executive Board meeting.

9.

Moving to Teams – Steve Hewitt:

Steve Hewitt reported that the move to Teams will take effect this month. He is planning to first use it on the next Executive Board call and it will be in use for the Annual meeting and – if all goes as expected – it will be what we use from here-on.

**10.
Other issues/questions – All:**

With no other business forthcoming, Tim Ziethen adjourned the call at 3:48pm Eastern.

**Next Meeting – Annual Meeting
2-2-24**

Decisions - Action Items

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Tim will follow-up with Tammy and with Ray Hessinger and AASHTO to get this final invoice clarified and paid.

NGEC two-pager:

The 2023 version of the two-page educational flyer is now available electronically or in hard copy by request from Steve Hewitt. It is also posted on the NGENC website www.ngenc.org.

To date: 368 copies (hard and electronic) have been distributed.

Updating the two-pager for 2024:

See above discussion under agenda item 6.

Quarterly Grant Progress Reports to FRA:

<p>The FFY 2023 fourth quarter report was submitted on time and was distributed to the Executive Board</p> <p>The next report is due to FRA by January 31, 2024.</p>
<p>Appointing a second vice chair:</p> <p>The subcommittee will not meet again prior to the Annual Meeting, so Steve Hewitt recommended that filling this vacancy be raised again at the 1-23-24 Executive Board meeting.</p>
<p>Review DRAFT FASC presentation for the 2024 Annual Meeting:</p> <p>Members of the FASC generally approved of the proposed presentation. Tim Ziethen will finalize it and get it to Steve Hewitt who will insert it on an updated PowerPoint template being developed by AASHTO.</p>
<p>Moving to Teams:</p> <p>On 1-3-24, Steve Hewitt reported that the move to Teams will take effect this month. He is planning to first use it on the next Executive Board call and it will be in use for the Annual meeting and – if all goes as expected – it will be what we use from here-on.</p>
<p>Next Meeting – Annual Meeting 2-2-24</p>

ATTACHMENTS



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

SECTION 305 NGEC Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)

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
1-3-23
3:00PM Eastern**

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| 1. Welcome/Open | Tim Ziethen |
| 2. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approval – Minutes from 11-8-23 | Tim Ziethen |
| 4. Treasurer’s Update
Update - Balance/Spend Rate/Forecast | Tim Ziethen |

Status – Amtrak/AASHTO and AASHTO/Sub-Contractor extensions
Clarifying Casamar Invoice FY 23 overage

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| 5. Discussion – future funding options | Tim Ziethen |
| 6. Status – Two pager Update for 2024 | Steve Hewitt |
| 7. Review DRAFT FASC presentation for the NGEAC Annual Meeting | Tim Ziethen |
| 8. Appointing a FASC second Vice Chair | Tim Ziethen |
| 9. Moving to Teams | Steve Hewitt |
| 10. Other Issues/Questions | All |

Next Meeting 2-2-24 Annual Meeting