

# SECTION 305 FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

NOVEMBER 8, 2023 3:00PM EASTERN

WEBEX MEETING

<b>FACILITATOR</b>	<i>Tim Ziethen, Chair of the S305 Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)</i>
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	<i>Tim Ziethen, Brian Beeler II, Amanda Martin, Amanda Martin also as proxy for John Oimoen, Troy Hughes, Ray Hessinger, Jeff Gordon, Steve Hewitt</i>
<b>ABSENTEES</b>	<i>John Oimoen, Amanda Villani, Larry Salci, Shayne Gill, Strat Cavros, Barley Fields, Mike Murray</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.

#### 3.

#### Approval of Minutes from the 10-11-23 meeting – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak

On a motion by Brian Beeler II for Maine DOT, and a second by Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT, the minutes from 10-11-23 were approved as submitted.

#### 4.

#### Treasurer's Update- Balance and Spend Rate – Forecast – Tim Ziethen:

##### Balance/Spend Rate Through August 2023

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.  
Expenses incurred through August 2023: \$1,247,141.37  
Balance remaining: \$2,858.63.  
Estimated spending, at current rate, for balance of the Grant: \$15,025.80  
Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$15,025.80.  
Estimated Balance at the end of the Grant Period: (\$12,167.17) over target.

The Grant is exhausted (accrual basis) however Amtrak needs to submit past invoices for reimbursement using normal process. To cover the overage, the Committee will utilize the Amtrak 12-month funding for the NGEC as approved by the Amtrak Board as a part of its Operating Plan (AOP). (\$260,000.)

Additional updates provided by Tim Ziethen:

Amtrak submitted the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter NGEC 305 Committee report to the FRA. Tim sent Steve Hewitt the Final version and he is to compare it to the last one he received to ensure he had the final, final.

Amtrak has extended the period of performance under contract with AASHTO – Strat is point of contact. Amtrak has sent an extension letter to Strat Cavros for his signature and once it is returned the 12-month extension is executed, Tim will check with Strat to see where this stands.

Tim also noted that once the PO is executed between Amtrak and AASHTO, the contract modifications extending the sub-contractor agreements through 9-30-24 can be executed by AASHTO.

Steve Hewitt noted that he has not received the modification letter (Modification 4) to execute the extension but has been paid for October. Steve assumes the extension letter will follow shortly for his signature to fully execute will be received soon. He added that all sub-contractors have continued to work in anticipation of 12-month extensions.

**5. Annual NGEC By-Laws Review – Recommendations to the Executive Board – Tim Ziethen:**

After some general discussion it was agreed that the FASC would recommend to the Executive Board that no changes to the By-Laws were needed.

A motion to inform the Executive Board that the FASC has reviewed the By-Laws and is recommending that no changes/revisions are needed was offered by Troy Hughes, MODOT, and was seconded by Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT. Tim asked for further comments and asked if there were any objections, hearing none, he determined that consensus has been achieved and the motion is approved. Steve Hewitt will send the recommendation to the Executive Board for its consideration.

**7. Review/Discuss the NGEC 2023 Educational (two Pager) Document Updates – Steve Hewitt:**

Steve gave an overview of changes he had recommended on 10-11-23 and asked if there were comments, suggestions or recommendations for changes that would update and improve the two-pager for 2024. At this point in time, Steve has not received any comments. Steve Hewitt did note that he had received a set of pictures from John Oimoen, IDOT, of interiors and a set of exterior photos from Art Peterson. These were sent to all FASC members prior to today's call.

Recommendations provided by Steve Hewitt on 10-11-23 and reviewed with the FASC again on 11-8-23 (discussions/additional revisions on 11-8-23 are in italics):

On Page one:

- Insert a new photo.
- Change date to 2024 in the upper right-hand corner.
- Update the Timeline column by including current numbers of Charger Locomotives and Venture cars in service. (*John Oimoen, provided updated numbers (64 in service 68 by year's end) but Steve has not received numbers on the Chargers. Steve will ask Joe Paul, Amtrak, if he has updated numbers.*)
- Troy Hughes that on the timeline the updating of the 305-900 NGEC Reference specification series be included so as to show that there were activities during 2023.
- 

On Page two:

- Update the photos. Steve noted there are three currently on Page two and refreshing them would be good to do. (*John Oimoen sent photos of the interiors and Art Peterson sent new exterior pictures. These were all forwarded to the FASC prior to this call – 11-8-23.*)
- Steve Hewitt noted that he was aware of one additional entity - Utah Transit Authority (UTA)- that was using the NGEC specs. All other listed under Realization on the second page continue to be relevant. He asked members of FASC to let him know if there are others.
- Troy Hughes commented on the GOALS stated on page two and was concerned that it is inaccurate as the cost savings have not necessarily been realized. Steve Hewitt suggested that while it may not have happened yet, the goal to get there still exists. He suggested the line below the stated goal be removed for accuracy.

After some discussion the FASC members agreed to review these proposed changes and send any additional comments to Steve Hewitt by COB on Friday 11-10-23. After that, Steve will provide the recommended revisions to the Executive Board for its discussion on its next call (11-28-23). Steve will also send the photos received thus far to the Executive Board members and will ask Wash DOT and Caltrans if they have photos to add for consideration.

(Following this meeting, Jeff Gordon provided Steve Hewitt with the photos in a PDF file and numbered which will make it easier for the Board to identify their preferred photos.) Thank you, Jeff!

**8. Researching Microsoft Teams Services/costs – Steve Hewitt:**

During the 10-31-23 Executive Board meeting, the sense of the Board was to change from WebEx to Teams. This was also the sense of the Technical subcommittee.

Steve was asked to research Teams to see if it was cost effective and would fulfill the needs of the Committee.

Steve reported to FASC that the costs seemed reasonable, less than what he was paying for WebEx and the 365 Business Standard would be the one he would suggest which has the capabilities to do what is being done now

and more. The cost is \$12.50 per month or \$150 annually.

Steve also noted that he will pick up the costs for Teams just as he has with WebEx over the last several years. The cost is reasonable and not enough to require reimbursement. Steve already paid for WebEx and will use it until he makes the transition to Teams and will not renew that subscription when it comes due.

There is a one-month free trial- which Steve will begin using to test it out. Much of what is included is beyond current needs but could be of value in the future – especially if the NGEC is funded long-term.

Microsoft 365 Business Standard:

Unlimited group meetings for up to 30 hours

Up to 300 participants per meeting

10 GB of cloud storage per user

Phone and web support

Unlimited chat with co-workers and customers

File Sharing, tasks, and polling

Data encryption for meetings, chats, calls, and files

Live caption in meetings

Microsoft Whiteboard

Hundreds of collaborative apps

Collaborative annotations in Teams meetings, so participants can contribute to shared content

Team meetings recordings and transcripts

Web and mobile versions of Microsoft Apps

Expanded cloud storage of 1TB per user.

Business class email

Guest access

Email hosting with custom domain address

Desktop version of Microsoft 365 apps with premium features

Webinar hosting

Attendee registration and reporting tools

Manage customer appointments.

Steve will likely begin with a test of the Teams service on the next FASC call 12-6-23 or on the Executive Board call on 11-28-23, before going "live".

**9.**

**Other issues/questions – All:**

With no other business forthcoming, Tim Ziethen adjourned the call at 3:35pm Eastern.

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

**by phone:** 1-415-655-0001

**Access code:** 126-073-1531

**12-6-23**

## Decisions - Action Items

**Treasurer's Report – 11-8-23:**

**Balance/Spend Rate Through August 2023**

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Additional updates provided by Tim Ziethen:

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Tim also noted that once the PO is executed between Amtrak and AASHTO, the contract modifications extending the sub-contractor agreements through 9-30-24 can be executed by AASHTO.

Steve Hewitt noted that he has not received the modification letter (Modification 4) to execute the extension but has been paid for October. Steve assumes the extension letter will follow shortly for his signature to fully execute will be received soon. He added that all sub-contractors have continued to work in anticipation of 12-month extensions.

**CRISI Grant Application Status:**

CRISI Grants were announced at the end of September – **the NGEC was NOT awarded a grant.**

A debrief with FRA has been requested.

**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 NGEC website [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org).

To date: 354 copies (hard and electronic) have been distributed.

**Updating the two-pager for 2024:**

See above discussion under agenda item 6.

Action:

FASC members agreed to review these proposed changes and send any additional comments to Steve Hewitt by COB on Friday 11-10-23. After that, Steve will provide the recommended revisions to the Executive Board for its discussion on its next call (11-28-23). Steve will also send the photos received thus far to the Executive Board members and will ask Wash DOT and Caltrans if they have photos to add for consideration.

**Quarterly Grant Progress Reports to FRA:**

The FFY 2023 fourth quarter report was submitted on time and was distributed to the Executive Board

The next report is due to FRA by January 31, 2024.

**Annual NGEC By-Laws Review:**

On 10-11-23, John Oimoen and Steve Hewitt reported that they reviewed the NGEC By-Laws and agreed that no changes to the By-Laws were needed at this time.

Action:

On 11-8-23, the FASC approved a motion to recommend no changes to the By-Laws were necessary. Steve Hewitt will provide this recommendation to the Executive Board.

**Potential Change from WebEx to TEAMS as web-conference service:**

On 10-31-23, the Executive Board agreed to move from WebEx to Teams, provided that the service was not cost prohibitive and would provide the necessary needs of the NGEC.

Action:

Steve Hewit was tasked with researching Teams and making a recommendation to the Executive Board. On the FASC call on 11-8-23, Steve reported his findings and noted that he will pick up the costs at no charge to the NGEC as he has done with WebEx. He has yet to decide what level of service he will select, but will plan to do a trial run either on the Executive Board call on 11-28-23 or on the FASC call on 12-6-23.

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

by phone: 1-415-655-0001

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Next Call 11-9-23

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  
11-8-23  
3:00PM Eastern**

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|--|--------------|
| 1. Welcome/Open  | Tim Ziethen  |
| 2. Roll Call   | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approval – Minutes from 10-11-23                            | Tim Ziethen  |
| 4. Treasurer's Update  | Tim Ziethen  |
| Update - Balance/Spend Rate/Forecast                           |              |
| Status – Amtrak/AASHTO and AASHTO/Sub-Contractor extensions    |              |
| 5. Annual NGEC By-Laws Review/recommendation to the Exec Board | Tim Ziethen  |

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|---|--------------|
| 6. Review/Discuss updates to the NGECEducational Document (two-pager) | Steve Hewitt |
| 7. Preparing FASC presentation for the NGECEducational Annual Meeting | Tim Ziethen  |
| 8. Researching Microsoft Teams Service/costs                          | Steve Hewitt |
| 9. Other Issues/Questions   | All          |

**Next Call 12-6-23**