



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

# NGEC FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE

MINUTES

MAY 22, 2024

3:00PM EASTERN

TEAMS MEETING

<b>FACILITATOR</b>	<i>Tim Ziethen, Chair of the S305 Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)</i>
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	<i>Tim Ziethen, Mike Murray, Brian Beeler II, Melina Lopez, Melina Lopez also as proxy for Amanda Martin and for Troy Hughes, Amanda Villani, Steve Hewitt, Strat Cavros,</i>
<b>ABSENTEES</b>	<i>Amanda Martin, Ray Hessinger, Troy Hughes, Shayne Gill, Larry Salci, Barley Fields</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 4-24-24 meeting – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak**

On a motion by Melina Lopez, IDOT, and a second by Mike Murray, FRA, the minutes from 4-24-24 were approved as submitted.

**4. Treasurer’s Report – Tim Ziethen:**

**Balance/Spend Rate Through February 2024**

Forecast/Accrual Amount to Reflect Billing Lag 60 days - \$30,000.  
 Invoiced + Accrual Expenses to date (through February – 103,831.34  
 Amtrak AOP Funding - \$260,000  
 Remaining funds (total available less Invoiced + Accrual) - \$156,168.66.  
 Estimated full year (YTD Incl. Carry Over + FC + Remaining Months @ Avg Spend TD) - \$170,132.02.  
 Current Average Monthly Spend - \$13,260.14

Steve Hewitt added that Strat Cavros had reported to the Board on 5-14-24 that invoiced expenses for March – reported in April were \$15, 095.72. The invoice will be forthcoming soon to Amtrak.

**5. Status: Finalizing Prior Grant Closeout Documents – Tim Ziethen:**

Tim Ziethen reported that of the items to be completed is the summary document reporting on accomplishments and providing an overview. Steve Hewitt and Tim have worked on this together. Tim noted it is to be reviewed for any final edits. The draft will be sent to Steve Hewitt for his final review and after that it will be completed for submittal. It is expected that it will be sent to FRA within about two weeks. The final report, which will include the summary and

a financial report, is not due until July 2024, but it will be sent as soon as it is ready, which is expected to be in about two weeks. The final QPR that was originally completed previously but though to be needed to be submitted again – is not necessary.

**6.**  
**Status: Quarterly Report (period ending 3-31-24) – Tim Ziethen:**

Tim Ziethen confirmed that he has completed the internal QPR with the assistance of Steve Hewitt and will provide the final copy to Steve for distribution to the NGEC Executive Board members. This internal document will mirror the prior grant QPRs that were submitted to FRA.

**Note:** The discussion moved to the CRISI Grant Application and FRA (Mike Murray) dropped off the call so as not to create a conflict as part of the FRA Grant Application review team.

**7.**  
**Finalizing CRISI Grant Application – Tim Ziethen:**

Tim Ziethen walked through key areas of the previous grant application for NGEC funding submitted in the last round. The one to be submitted in this round will not change much as the NGEC mission is not changed. It is being reviewed by Tim, Steve Hewitt and Meaghan Histan Amtrak Grants. The intent is to update it where needed and to make sure that it is improved by some additional benefits and future activities being included in the application.

Tim asked that any FASC member that has suggested items that should be included provide them to Steve Hewitt by Friday 5-24-24.

Steve Hewitt noted that a few items that he believes should be included would be a line referring to connecting communities as a benefit. He added that an update of lessons learned through the many procurements that have taken place should be developed and included in the Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Recommended Practices Document which was adopted as a living document.

Steve added that developing specifications for CCTV and wayside monitoring systems should be a part of the NGEC's future activities if granted funding. Generating specifications utilizing alternate propulsion or other emerging technologies should also be included in the application.

Tim Ziethen noted that he has a request into the grants office about distributing the draft to FASC or Board members is ok. Presently, they are keeping it close because of the expectation of confidentiality. Tim is also asking if the previous submittal can be distributed so that members can look at it and provide suggested improvements.

In the meantime, Tim asks that the FASC members think about what the NGEC should be doing going forward and what it has accomplished and provide any suggestions to Steve Hewitt.

Steve Hewitt added that he has provided the TSSSA document, the two-pager backgrounder for 2024, and the Recommended Practices document to Tim Ziethen as part of the application packet. Steve is also providing some newer pictures previously submitted for either the website or the 2024 backgrounder to be added to the new application.

**8.**  
**Status: Letters of Support – Tim/Steve:**

Tim Ziethen emphasized that submitting letters of support by individual states is critical and asked that all NGEC states submit one. If a state cannot get it through its chain of command by the requested deadline – please still send it in. Letters can be accepted and sent in to FRA after the application deadline. The sooner the better, of course. The more support letters that can go in as part of the application packet – the better.

Tim also confirmed that the match for the CRISI Grant is 20% and that Amtrak will provide the match. There had been a question about this from one of the states preparing a letter of support and needed confirmation that Amtrak was covering the match.

The request would be for \$2 million for the period of at least 5 years. \$1.6 million from the federal grant and \$400,000 match from Amtrak.

**9.**  
**Other Potential Funding Options – Tim:**

While other options are still being sought, the two that seem the most possible are the CRISI grant or an appropriation. The NGEC cannot lobby, individual states can but NGEC as an entity cannot and neither can Amtrak. This has made it difficult to get support in Congress for an appropriation. The request has gone in each year but to no avail since the initial \$2m million appropriation and the following \$2 million provide via a CR in 2011 or 2012. Thus, the NGEC has had to manage its limited funds as efficiently as possible over these past 14 years with no additional funding provided except got the \$260,000 interim funding from the Amtrak AOP to keep the NGEC going for 12 months as its funds expired on September 30, 2023.

This interim funding was seen as a one-time stop-gap when a CRISI Grant was not awarded in the last round. This is not expected to happen again and a lack of new funds will mean the NGEC will ultimately cease to exist and its document control activities which keep the specs current will stop. Without continuous review the specs will become obsolete.

**8.  
Other issues/questions – All:**

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

**Next Meeting  
6-19-24**

**Decisions - Action Items**

**Balance/Spend Rate Through February 2024**

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Steve Hewitt added that Strat Cavros had reported to the Board on 5-14-24 that invoiced expenses for March – reported in April were \$15, 095.72. The invoice will be forthcoming soon to Amtrak.

**Preparing Prior Grant Close Out – next steps:**

Tim Ziethen reported that of the items to be completed is the summary document reporting on accomplishments and providing an overview. Steve Hewitt and Tim have worked on this together. Tim noted it is to be reviewed for any final edits. The draft will be sent to Steve Hewitt for his final review and after that it will be completed for submittal. It is expected that it will be sent to FRA within about two weeks. The final report, which will include the summary and a financial report, is not due until July 2024, but it will be sent as soon as it is ready, which is expected to be in about two weeks. The final QPR that was originally completed previously but though to be needed to be submitted again – is not necessary.

**Future Funding for the NGEC:**

**Preparing CRISI Grant Application – steps/timeline:**

The CRISI Grant NOFO has been released. Tim is working with Amtrak Grants on filing a new application. Ther application is due to FRA by 5-28-24.

The application is being finalized – states are asked to provide any suggestions they may have to Steve Hewitt by COB 5-24-24.

**Letters of Support:**

Tim Ziethen emphasized that submitting letters of support by individual states is critical and asked that all NGEC states submit one. If a state cannot get it through its chain of command by the requested deadline – please still send it in. Letters can be accepted and sent in to FRA after the application deadline. The sooner the better, of course. The more support letters that can go in as part of the application packet – the better.

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The request would be for \$2 million for the period of at least 5 years. \$1.6 million from the federal grant and \$400,000 match from Amtrak.

**Other potential funding opportunities:**

While other options are still being sought, the two that seem the most possible are the CRISI grant or an appropriation.

**NGEC 2024 two-pager – public awareness:**

The 2024 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: 462 copies (hard and electronic) have been distributed.

**Quarterly Report (period ending 3-31-24):**

This report is completed and will be distributed (internally).

**Next Meeting  
6-19-24**

**ATTACHMENTS**



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

Microsoft Teams meeting  
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**AGENDA  
5-22-24  
3:00PM Eastern**

- |                                    |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Welcome/Open                    | Tim Ziethen  |
| 2. Roll Call                       | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approval – Minutes from 4-24-24 | Tim Ziethen  |
| 4. Treasurer's Update              | Tim Ziethen  |

Update - Balance/Spend Rate/Forecast

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 5. Status: Finalizing Prior Grant Close Out Documents | Tim       |
| 6. Status: Quarterly Report (period ending 3-31-24)   | Tim       |
| 7. Finalizing CRISI Grant Application                 | Tim       |
| 8. Status: Letters of Support                         | Tim/Steve |
| 9. Other Potential Funding Options                    | Tim       |
| 10. Other Issues/Questions                            | All       |

**Next Meeting 6-19-24**