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

## SECTION 305 NGEC Executive Board

MINUTES

7-9-24

11:30 EASTERN

CONFERENCE CALL

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>FACILITATOR</b> | <i>Ray Hessinger, Chair S305 NGEC Executive Board</i>   |
| <b>ATTENDEES</b>   | <b>Board Members:</b> Ray Hessinger, Dan Ruppert, Mike Murray, Amanda Martin, Brian Beeler II, Tim Ziethen, Jason Orthner, Melina Lopez, Richard Kedzior, Mike Jenkins, Jason Biggs, Sarah Hernandez for Kyle Gradinger <b>Support Staff and Colleagues:</b> Jon Dees, Tammy Krause, Steve Hewitt, Shayne Gill, Barley Fields, Dave "Emeritus" Warner |
| <b>ABSENTEES</b>   | <b>Board Members:</b> Kyle Gradinger, Troy Hughes, <b>Support/Colleagues:</b> Ryan Sharpe, Larry Salci, Strat Cavros  |

### DECISIONS MADE

**1.**

**Welcome – Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT, Chair, NGEC Executive Board:**

Chairman Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT, opened the meeting, and asked Steve Hewitt to call the roll.

**2.**

**Roll Call – Steve Hewitt, NGEC Program Manager:**

Steve Hewitt called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

**3.**

**Action items Review – Steve Hewitt:**

Steve Hewitt provided a brief review of action/ongoing tracking items not on today's agenda.

**Industry Participation:**

Industry involvement continues to remain steady. Currently there are around 200 industry participants.

**2024 NGEC two-pager Handout Flyer:**

The 2024 version of the two-page educational flyer remains 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: 463 copies have been distributed. (each of the new members received an electronic copy.)

**VIA Rail Equipment Procurement:**

VIA Rail gave a detailed presentation during the 2024 NGEC Annual Meeting and will be invited to do the same at the 2025 Meeting.

**Next Update 2025 – NGEC Annual Meeting**

**CtDOT Rail car Procurement:**

Nothing new to report from the last update provided on 6-11-24:

*We are working with Alstom to close out open items from PDR. The proposed truck design needed modification, due to some tight clearances. We believe that we now have sufficient clearance info to proceed on the truck design.*

*Please ask the NGEN members if they have input that they can provide on their experience with King Air from China HVAC systems to please email me.*

**4. Approval of the Minutes from the 6-11-24 Meeting– Ray Hessinger:**

On a motion offered by Richard Kedzior, Wisconsin DOT, and seconded by Melina Lopez, Illinois DOT, the minutes from the 6-11-24 meeting were approved as submitted.

**Due to the fact that some Executive Board members had to leave the call early, Ray Hessinger juggled the agenda around and went to agenda item 11 – The Treasurer’s Report - after approval of the minutes from the last meeting.**

**11.**

**Treasurer’s Report and status update on NGEN Funding – Tim Ziethen:**

Tim Ziethen provided the following update:

**Balance/Spend Rate Through April 2024**

Total Invoiced/Incurred (Including Carryover) - \$102,923.49  
Forecast/Accrual Amount to Reflect Billing Lag 60 days - \$30,000.  
Invoiced + Accrual Expenses to date (through March) – \$127,076.51  
Amtrak AOP Funding - \$260,000  
Remaining funds (total available less Invoiced + Accrual) - \$127,076.51  
Estimated full year (YTD Incl. Carry Over + FC + Remaining Months @ Avg Spend TD) - \$173,806.13.  
Current Average Monthly Spend - \$13,627.55

**Status - CRISI Grant Application – Support Letters status:**

The CRISI Grant Application for funding the NGEN was submitted on time to the portal. It included many letters of support. Tim did not have the exact number, but it was a good representation. **It is not too late to send in support letters. They should be sent to Tim Ziethen and Mehgan Hestand, Amtrak Grants.**

Tim added that the application is in the FRA review phase along with other submittals. CRISI Grant awards will not be announced until the October/November timeframe.

**Other potential funding opportunities other than a CRISI Grant:**

Tim commented that there is not much to add on other potential funding options and reiterated that there is no perfect “other” option. Over the years there have been discussions establishing fee or subscription-based funding, but, while possible, there are many terms and conditions that would need to be “talked through”. The easiest and cleanest source of funding would be through the appropriations process which is how the NGEN was initially funded, but that has not gained much traction over the years.

**Next Steps if not funded – or if funded:**

Ray Hessinger asked if the Amtrak AOP funds that have been allocated to the NGEN for FY 24 are available until expended or do they go away at the end of the fiscal year – 9-30-24.

Tim Ziethen responded that in normal instances, the funding is for the current fiscal year only and is a “use it or lose it” situation. He noted that with regard to the NGEN, he is asking Amtrak Finance for clarification.

Ray Hessinger emphasized that clarification is needed because in only a few months “we” will be in FY 25 and that is before CRISI Grant awards are even scheduled to be announced. Once announced, there is anticipated to be about a 6-month period before the CRISI funds are obligated and available.

So – either way, it is important to understand what happens at the end of this fiscal year. If the NGEN is not awarded a CRISI Grant and begins the process of closing down it will also need time and funding during that transition.

Ray also noted that there is a sense of urgency for the Board to have some answers because it is scheduled to meet only twice more after today’s meeting prior to the end of FY 24. Ray cited that sub-contractors are also impacted as

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their contracts end on 9-30-24.

Tim Ziethen commented that he “understands the dilemma” and that he is hoping to get all of the questions resolved or answered as soon as possible. Once he gets answers, he will inform Steve Hewitt so that he can send the information out to Board members.

Steve Hewitt reminded Tim that there is an NGEC Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC) meeting next week (9-17-24) and many Board members are participants. He suggested that would be a good opportunity for further discussion if answers are forthcoming.

Dave Warner suggested that the Board move to two meetings a month for the time being.

Ray Hessinger commented that he has not ruled out increasing Executive Board meeting frequency temporarily but was not there yet. He agreed the FASC meeting next week could be helpful.

Mike Murray, FRA, commented that he did not see this as being an emergency situation. Amtrak has operating funds for the NGEC for this year. Mike added that for the last three years he has had many discussions back and forth with Amtrak, within FRA, with lawyers/finance etc. trying to figure out sustainable funding for the NGEC. Mike noted that once October 1<sup>st</sup> comes along and if there is no new funding in place, he does not see it as an emergency. It will not impact the specifications or the work of the NGEC even though he understands there are some monthly costs. He does not think it is something that the FRA should be asked to fix and that it can't be an emergency.

Ray Hessinger responded that at this time there is no commitment to fund the NGEC in 2025 from Amtrak or FRA. So – while it may not be an emergency – it is “pretty urgent” with no known funding source to continue to fund the work of the Committee.

Mike Murray added that Amtrak used the NGEC Specifications as basis for their new equipment procurement and “it is reasonable as a sustainable path – to have Amtrak allocate resources to the NGEC...it's like an FTE per year.”

Tim Ziethen commented that he agrees that it is not an emergency, but there is a sense of urgency and that “we need to figure it out”. There is “no long-term strategy” for funding the NGEC. It was previously funded through two appropriations and then the one-year of funding provided from the Amtrak AOP. Tim emphasized that this “was not necessarily meant to be long-term”. Tim added that there are a “lot of balls in the air” and “we need to keep working at it”. Tim also noted, “absent an appropriation we will keep having this problem and we need creative solutions”. Further, Tim commented “there is no drama, but we are trying to be good stewards.”

Mike Murray responded that in equipment acquisitions, “Amtrak has taken a lead role in the last procurement with engagement with states and stakeholders...Amtrak has, and is, providing support.” He noted that this is reasonable and sustainable. “We” are looking for flexibility to possibly use Amtrak capital rather than operating funds for the NGEC especially pertaining to long-distance equipment.

Jason Biggs, WSDOT, noted that, as a take away, he is hearing that Amtrak would have to ask for funding for the NGEC. He also noted the need to keep building on the lessons learned document as there has been so many more procurements since the original document was developed by the NGEC (NGEC 305-200 Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Recommended Practices). There is a great deal of additional information to share with entities looking to procure equipment, “if Amtrak is amenable to it”.

Mike Murray added that they are still talking about what the full scope of activities and deliverables should be. He noted that the “specs are the value/product” expected to be seen from funding the NGEC. Other activities are not the critical part of it.

Steve Hewitt noted that in the CRISI Grant application, the ongoing development of the Equipment Acquisition and Ownership Recommended Practices “living document” is included. It is an integral part of the proposed activities/deliverables.

Ray Hessinger added, as the discussion closed, that he agrees there needs to be some decisions made, but it needs to be understood that “we are on a limping-along budget pending long-term funding”. Without such funding, the NGEC cannot take on any major new activities or deliverables.

**Status – Completing Prior Grant Close Out documents:**

Tim Ziethen reported that the prior grant close out documents are under final review by Amtrak Grants and Finance. Tim expressed his thanks to Steve Hewitt for his help in filling out the details.

Tim anticipates that the documents will be submitted to FRA within a week of two.

**5.  
Update: Multi-State Venture Car Procurement – Caltrans:**

There was no new update provided for today's meeting, so this item was tabled until the next meeting.

**6.  
Update: Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement – Ray Hessinger:**

Ray Hessinger provided information from Metro-North:

Locomotives #301 and #302 have left Siemens (5-16-24) and have arrived at shipped to Pueblo for testing which is now under way.

Metro-North and Siemens have approved various FAI's. Siemens, Metro-North and LIRR are negotiating exercising options for LIRR.

**7.  
Update: Amtrak Vehicle Procurements – Dan Ruppert, Amtrak:**

Dan Ruppert provided a brief update:

On the new Acela:

Qualification testing continues – meetings are taking place every day between Amtrak, Alstom and FRA.

On Airo:

Several are in production and wrapping up FDR and FAI's on a variety of components. Dan did not have the exact numbers – but the last update noted that there were 47 vehicles in production -43 coach cars and 4 locomotives.

On the ALC 42:

There are 54 in service, 6 in for commissioning in Wilmington and 2 in Philadelphia. There are several en route to commissioning or in commissioning. This procurement is proceeding nicely.

On the GP38:

17 are in service. Several more are en route for commissioning and several are at the site.

On the Long-Distance Trainsets:

Continues to be an active RFP. Amtrak is working with Carbuilders and other stakeholders – nothing more to report due to it being an active RFP.

**8.  
Update: Document Control Management – Tammy Krause:**

Tammy Krause provided the following update for inclusion in today's meeting minutes:

*The next revision of the Single Level Specification has 131 proposed changes. Of these DCRs, 114 of them came from the Bi-Level Specification Revision D that was completed in February of last year, and 14 are from the Trainset Revision B that was completed in October of 2019. There are 3 DCRs that are new. The Leaders of the Mechanical, Interiors, Electrical and VTI Working Groups have received the DCRs for their respective areas.*

*The three new DCRs are with the Mechanical Group. The WG Leader of the Mechanical Group has not been able to have a meeting. I am going to ask for her recommendation on the DCRs so that I can submit the entire list to the TSC by the end of the week. I would like her recommendation on the three new DCRs prior to submittal to the full technical subcommittee.*

Steve Hewitt asked if Tammy anticipated having a vote of the subcommittee next week (7-18-24). Tammy emphasized that 128 of the 131 DCRs have already been adjudicated as a part of the update to other specifications (noted above), and that only 3 of the DCRs are new and need consideration. Steve Hewitt stated that he understood that but would the Mechanical working group be able to make a recommendation to the full subcommittee by the 7-18-24 meeting and in a timely enough fashion for consideration on that date.

Tammy was reaching out to the Team leader of the Mechanical working group and was hopeful that she could get a

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recommendation from that group in time to distribute a summary of changes in advance of the subcommittee meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Steve will include this as an agenda item for the Chair's consideration unless Tammy tells him it is not ready.

**9.**

**Filling Vacancies on Review Panels: -Ray/Steve**

**NGEC Executive Board – Specification Review Panels/Members: 2024**

**Consultants/ Technical Support to the Review Panels:**

Review Panel Consultant – Larry Salci  
NGEC Support – Steve Hewitt  
Technical Support – Tammy Krause  
Amtrak Technical Support – Mike Kraft for all except the Locomotive Review Panel  
Amtrak Technical Support – Devon Parsons – Locomotive Review Panel

**Bi-Level Car Review Panel:**

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT – Chair  
vacancy, Caltrans  
Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT  
Melissa Shurland, FRA

**Locomotive Review Panel:**

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT – Chair  
vacancy, Caltrans  
Melina Lopez, IDOT  
Jason Biggs, Washington State DOT  
Melissa Shurland, FRA

**Trainset Review Panel:**

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT – Chair  
Maria Hobbs, Iowa DOT  
Jason Biggs, Washington State DOT  
vacancy, Caltrans  
Melissa Shurland, FRA

**Single Level Rail Car Review Panel:**

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT -- Chair  
Maria Hobbs, Iowa DOT  
Jason Biggs, WSDOT  
vacancy, Caltrans  
Melissa Shurland, FRA

**DMU Review Panel Members:**

Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT -- Chair  
Melissa Shurland, FRA  
Brian Beeler, for Maine DOT  
vacancy, Caltrans

**Background/status as of 7-9-24:**

Following the 6-11-24 meeting, Amanda Martin named Maria Hobbs, Iowa DOT to the technical subcommittee and the Trainset Specification Review Panel and Single Level Rail Car Specification Review Panel to fill the vacancy left by Ed Egle's departure from Iowa state service. (Thank you, Amanda and Maria!)

Kyle Gradinger responded to an email from Steve Hewitt with details on the Review Panels and the specific issue of filling the Single Level Specification Review Panel due to the upcoming DCRs approval by the Technical Subcommittee. Kyle stated that he and his team will discuss who to name as representatives for each of the panels with an understanding that the first focus should be on the Single Level Review Panel. Caltrans will get a name to Steve Hewitt by next week. (week of 6-17-24)

As of today (7-9-24) Caltrans has not named a rep. Sarah Hernandez, Caltrans, agreed to take this back to Kyle Gradinger and ask that, at the very least, he appoint someone to the Single Level Rail Car Specification Review Panel which will likely be convened at the end of July or early August.

**10.**

**Overview FRA Office of Safety, presentation to the Tech SC by Dr. Phani Raj - Dan Ruppert:**

- "FRA's Requirements and Approval Procedures for New Technology Use in Rail Operations"

Dan Ruppert provided a brief overview and background on the series of presentations to be given to the Technical subcommittee by FRA.

The first presentation was given on 6-20-24 by Dr Phani Raj, FRA. The presentation covered the mission of the FRA Office of Safety and the process for introducing new technology. The full presentation was distributed on 6-21-24, by Steve Hewitt, to the entire subcommittee membership and was sent to AASHTO for posting to the NGEC website.

The feedback was very positive and a lot of great information was provided.

Ray Hessinger noted that he thought there was great information, and he would encourage Board members who are not on the technical subcommittee to take advantage of the opportunity and plan to attend.

Dan Ruppert agreed – and emphasized that this is a good opportunity to become familiar with research that is being done.

Shayne Gill, AASHTO, asked if this or any of the other topics would be a good fit for a plenary session on new technologies that AASHTO is conducting during its Annual Rail Meeting.

Ray Hessinger commented that he believes this one would be a good candidate and would reach an audience not covered by the NGEC technical subcommittee.

**12.**

**Other/Adjourn – Ray Hessinger:**

With no other business forthcoming, Chairman Hessinger adjourned the 7-9-24 meeting of the Executive Board at 12:17 pm Eastern.

**Next Executive Board Meeting 8-6-24**

**Decisions/Action Items**

**Treasurer's Report and status update on NGEC Funding:**

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Tim added that the application is in the FRA review phase along with other submittals. CRISI Grant awards will not be announced until the October/November timeframe.

**– Completing Prior Grant Close Out documents:**

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Tim expressed his thanks to Steve Hewitt for his help in filling out the details.

Tim anticipates that the documents will be submitted to FRA within a week of two.

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Ray Hessinger emphasized that clarification is needed because in only a few months “we” will be in FY 25 and that is before CRISI Grant awards are even scheduled to be announced. Once announced, there is anticipated to be about a 6-month period before the funds are obligated.

Either way, it is important to understand what happens at the end of this fiscal year. If the NGEC is not awarded a CRISI Grant and begins the process of closing down it will also need time and funding during that transition.

Tim Ziethen will try to get clarification on these questions and will discuss further on the 7-17-24 FASC call.

**2024 NGEC Backgrounder educational document:**

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: 463 copies have been distributed (hard/soft).

**Industry Participation:**

As of 7-9-24, industry involvement continues to remain steady. Currently there are around 200 industry participants.

**Multi-state Venture Car Procurement as of 6-6-24:**

*All coach type FDR stages are complete, including Cab Car and Café Car. The Cab Car and Café Car MCAT simulation reports have been approved by the states and the FRA.*

*The Cab Car Complete FAI and FRA sample car inspections are complete. The Cab Car 238.111(b) test plan has been submitted to FRA and the 238 consist is currently completing type testing in preparation for corridor testing.*

*All 137 cars are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. IDOT coaches and Caltrans trainsets are currently in revenue service and additional cars are being added as they are commissioned and accepted.*

There was no new update for 7-9-24.

**Next Update: 8-6-24**

**Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement as of 6-6-24:**

Status provided by Marci Petterson, CtDOT) on 6-6-24:

*We are working with Alstom to close out open items from PDR. The proposed truck design needed modification, due to some tight clearances. We believe that we now have sufficient clearance info to proceed on the truck design.*

*Please ask the NGEC members if they have input that they can provide on their experience with King HVAC systems to please email me.*

Nothing new reported on 7-9-24.

**Next Update – 8-6-24**

**Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement as of April 2024 reported on 7-9-24:**

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**Next Update – 8-6-24**

**Status - Document Control Management as of 7-9-24:**

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**Next Update – 8-6-24**

**VIA Rail Equipment Procurement:**

VIA Rail gave a detailed presentation during the 2024 NGEC Annual Meeting and will be invited to do the same at the 2025 Meeting.

**Next Update – 2025 NGEC Annual Meeting**

**Updates: States and Amtrak – Charger Locomotive and Venture Cars Experience:**

Detailed updates were provided during the 2024 Annual Meeting.

**Next Update: As Appropriate**

**Filling Vacancies on the Review Panels as of 7-9-24:**

No change to Caltrans status. All other slots are filled. Kyle Gradinger, Caltrans is still working on determining who will be Caltrans representative on all Review Panels. Sarah Hernandez will follow up with Kyle and stress that the priority is naming a rep to the Single Level Specification Review Panel which will be re-convened in July



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or August.

**Technical Subcommittee/FRA research topic presentations:**

The first in a series of monthly FRA presentations to the NGEc technical subcommittee was given on 6-20-24 and was titled: "FRA's Requirements and Approval Procedures for New Technology Use in Rail Operations"

For Executive Board members not on the Technical subcommittee please feel free to attend whatever presentations you are interested in. Let Steve Hewitt know if you want to attend a particular meeting and he will send a meeting invite.

**2025 NGEc Annual Meeting – new location and date/time - Steve Hewitt:**

Over the past few months, AASHTO has been searching for a home for the 2025 Rail Winter Meeting. They searched the DC and Virginia area and found a home in **Crystal City, VA at the Renaissance Arlington Capital View**. This is not in our usual location, but the hotel does offer easy access to Reagan National Airport (DCA) as well as the Metro for those who want to go into DC. AASHTO was unable to secure appropriate meeting space at the Hyatt Regency as another group is booked in the large ballroom and thus, we wouldn't be able to continue to increase our meeting size.

The Rail Meetings Dates are January 28-30. The NGEc meeting will take place on Thursday 1-30-25 in the afternoon. The exact times and further info will follow over the next few months.

**Next Meeting -8-6-24**

**NGEC Executive Board Meeting  
7-9-24**

**11:30 AM – 12:30 Noon Eastern**

**Join on your computer, mobile app or room device.**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 218 969 011 071

Passcode: r7bGDN

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

[Learn More](#) | [Meeting options](#)

**Agenda**

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|---|----------------|
| 1. Welcome and Open the Meeting   | Ray Hessinger  |
| 2. Roll call  | Steve Hewitt   |
| 3. Action Items Status Review   | Steve Hewitt   |
| 4. Approval of Minutes from 6-11-24 meeting   | Ray Hessinger  |
| 5. Update: Multi State Venture Car Procurement  | Kyle Gradinger |
| 6. Update: Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement   | Ray Hessinger  |
| 7. Update: Amtrak Vehicle Procurements  | Dan Ruppert    |
| 8. Update: Document Control   | Tammy Krause   |
| 9. Filling Vacancies on Review Panels   | Ray Hessinger  |
| 10. Overview FRA Office of Safety, presentation to the Technical subcommittee by Dr. Phani Raj:<br>- "FRA's Requirements and Approval Procedures for New Technology Use in Rail Operations" | Dan Ruppert    |

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11. Treasurer's Update

Tim Ziethen

- Balance/Spend Rate/Forecast
- CRISI Grant Application – support letters status
- Next Steps if funded/not funded
- Other potential funding opportunities
- Status – Completing Prior Grant Close Out documents

12. Other:

All

13. Adjourn

Ray Hessinger

**Next Meeting: - 8-6-24**