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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

8-6-24

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, Jon Dees for Jason Orthner, Melina Lopez, Melina Lopez also as proxy for Troy Hughes, Richard Kedzior, Mike Jenkins, Sarah Hernandez for Kyle Gradinger <b>Support Staff and Colleagues:</b> Joe Paul, Larry Salci, Tammy Krause, Steve Hewitt, Shayne Gill, Barley Fields, Strat Cavros, Olivia Arant (Caltrans)
<b>ABSENTEES</b>	<b>Board Members:</b> Kyle Gradinger, Jason Biggs, Troy Hughes, <b>Support/Colleagues:</b> Curt Massie

### 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: 488 copies have been distributed.

The process for updating the two-pager for 2025 has begun within the FASC.

**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**

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**CtDOT Rail car Procurement:**

On 7-18-24 Marci Petterson, CTDOT, reported to the NGEN Technical subcommittee that they are progressing well on the PDR on some systems. Truck clearance was ok'd by Metro-North which was good news.

Marci also noted that she has been getting some requests for information that she needs to get from Amtrak. She has reached out and connected with Dan Ruppert.

**4. Approval of the Minutes from the 7-9-24-24 Meeting– Ray Hessinger:**

On a motion offered by Richard Kedzior, Wisconsin DOT, and seconded by Melina Lopez, IDOT, the minutes from the 7-9-24 meeting were approved as submitted.

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

On 7-18-24, Ryan Sharpe provided the following update to the NGEN Technical subcommittee. Steve Hewitt read that update into the record of today's meeting minutes.

*All coach type FDR and FAI 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.*

*he 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 testing is expected to begin on July 17. The first café cars have been shipped to Chicago and are being prepared for revenue service.*

*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.*

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

Ray Hessinger provided information from Metro-North:

Locomotives 301 and 302 are at Pueblo for type testing which is progressing well.

Locomotive 302 is in final assembly at the Siemens plant.

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

Dan Ruppert provided a brief update:

On the new Acela:

Qualification testing continues – with meetings are taking place between Amtrak, the OEM and FRA.

QPT 2 testing has restarted.

Dan noted that there is a "real strong relationship between FRA, Amtrak and the car builder" and there is a "light at the end of the tunnel".

On Airo:

This procurement is progressing well. There are 55 cars in production - 51 coach cars and 4 locomotives. A and B battery car shell testing was successful.

The intent is to have the first trainset on the corridor in the spring of 2025.

On the ALC 42:

Dan reported that they are progressing well with an average of 2 locomotives accepted per month (some months there will be 1 and the next month there may be 3).

Overall, this procurement is in a "steady state". Several tests are getting wrapped up on FMI's and things like PTC to put in the equipment.

On the Long-Distance Trainsets:

Continues in the RFP process. It is moving along well with Amtrak working with carbuilders with a target of issuing the RFP by the end of this year or early next year.

**8.**

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

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

*Document Control is waiting on the Mechanical Working Group to finish reviewing a few DCRs. They are planning a call this week. As soon as I have their decision on the DCRs I will submit them to the entire TSC.*

*I am continuing to meet with the Technical Writer to work on de-Amtraking the PRIIA sub-specs.*

**9.**

**Overview of FRA presentation to the Tech SC on 7-18-24 by Melissa Shurland – Dan Ruppert:**

*"Rail Decarbonization: Overview of FRA Research on Advancing Clean Energy Technologies for Rail"*

Dan Ruppert gave a brief overview of the presentation given by Melissa Shurland, FRA to the Technical subcommittee on 7-18-24. Dan asked Steve Hewitt if he had sent the presentation out – and Steve replied he had but would send it out again. After the meeting, Steve re-sent the presentation and found that it was too large a file for the Amtrak server so it had been rejected). Most states were able to receive it and AASHTO has posted it on the NGENC website.

Dan also reported that he felt the participation was high and resulted in good response from members (especially those from the industry) for this presentation and the efforts to bring more information on technology efforts. In general, it was very well received and there was good engagement during the meeting and after.

Steve Hewitt concurred and noted that attendance for the meeting was strong and that the overall program of receiving a presentation a month from the FRA is getting great response and is creating another area of interest for subcommittee members.

Steve noted that there will be a one month pause in the presentation schedule (August) due to vacations. The next presentation will take place in September on either the first or second bi weekly meeting of the subcommittee that month.

**10.**

**Update/Overview: NGENC/SPRCDC Fly-in – Ray Hessinger:**

Ray Hessinger reported that he participated in a Washington, DC "Fly-in" as a member of the Executive Committee of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC). The NGENC was not the "main purpose of the meetings that day, but it did come up in a meeting with staff from Senator Welch's office (Vermont). The Senator has introduced legislation to require baby changing stations on-board all new passenger rail equipment. Ray was able to point out that the NGENC specifications already call for this and are on the "Venture" Cars and will be on the Airo trains as well. Ray noted that it would be fine if they chose to codify this in law. The information was "very well appreciated" as a part of the conversation between SPRC and the Senator's staff.

**11.**

**Treasurer's Report and status update on NGENC Funding – Tim Ziethen:**

Tim Ziethen provided the following update:

**Balance/Spend Rate Through May 2024**

Total Invoiced/Incurred (Including Carryover) - \$126,828.75

Forecast/Accrual Amount to Reflect Billing Lag 60 days - \$30,000.

Invoiced + Accrual Expenses to date (through March) – \$156,828.75

Amtrak AOP Funding - \$260,000

Remaining funds (total available less Invoiced + Accrual) - \$103,171.25

Estimated full year (YTD Incl. Carry Over + FC + Remaining Months @ Avg Spend TD) – not provided.

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Current Average Monthly Spend – just under \$15,000.

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

The CRISI Grant Application for funding the NGEC was submitted on time to the portal. It included many letters of support. **It is not too late to send in support letters. They should be sent to Tim Ziethen and Meghan Histand, 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.

**Funding Next Steps:**

Tim Ziethen reported that Amtrak continues to have internal discussions and is talking with FRA on how to “handle this” and whether it will be part of the Amtrak annual grant. Tim is talking with Amtrak grants and Amtrak accounting.

Tim asked Mike Murray, FRA if he could set up some time to discuss an open question on issues related to using capital funds or general funds and, in general, “how it can all work”. Mike Murray agreed and said he will share times with Tim that work for him. Tim noted “sooner is better”.

Tim emphasized that he is not sending signals to stop NGEC activities – it is not an emergency – and they are continuing to look for a way forward.

Tim added that he hopes to have it resolved within the next one or two weeks. He recommended that “we keep moving forward and hopefully we will figure it out shortly.

**Status - Completing Prior Grant Close-Out Documents:**

Tim reported that all of the requirements for completing the closeout were met. The NGEC specifications were uploaded to FRA along with the technical white paper. Tim expressed thanks to Steve Hewitt for his help in this process. He also noted that he informed FRA that reference documents were also available to be uploaded if they are needed.

**12.**

**Teams Meeting 8-8-24 with Volpe – Ray/Steve:**

Ray Hessinger and Steve Hewitt will be meeting with VOLPE (at the request of VOLPE) on Thursday 8-8-24 at 10:00AM to discuss the following:

*re: NGEC Perspectives on policy options to help strengthen the health of the transit manufacturing industry*

*The USDOT Volpe Center has a current project with the FTA to identify policy options to help strengthen the health of the transit vehicle manufacturing industry. Given your experience with the NGEC, we would like to include your perspective on the issue.*

*We would like to hear perspectives on the following topics:*

- 1. Opportunities for continued equipment standardization*
- 2. The impact of innovative procurement methods*
- 3. Challenges in the manufacturing industry*
- 4. Opportunities for the FTA to support the manufacturing sector and transit agencies*

**13.**

**Other/Adjourn – Ray Hessinger:**

Steve Hewitt asked Sarah Hernandez to remind Kyle Gradinger about filling Caltrans Vacancy on all of the NGEC Review Panels with the priority being the Single Level Rail Car Specification Panel which will be convened likely in September or October.

With no other business forthcoming, Chairman Hessinger adjourned the 8-6-24 meeting of the Executive Board at 12:01pm Eastern.

**Next Executive Board Meeting 9-3-24**

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## Decisions/Action Items

### Treasurer's Report and status update on NGEN Funding:

#### Balance/Spend Rate Through May 2024

Total Invoiced/Incurred (Including Carryover) - \$126,828.75  
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Estimated full year (YTD Incl. Carry Over + FC + Remaining Months @ Avg Spend TD) – not provided.  
Current Average Monthly Spend – just under \$15,000.

#### 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.**

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:

All of the requirements for completing the closeout were met. The NGEN specifications were uploaded to FRA along with the technical white paper. Tim Ziethen expressed thanks to Steve Hewitt for his help in this process. He also noted that he informed FRA that reference documents were also available to be uploaded if they are needed.

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

On 8-6-24, Tim Ziethen reported that Amtrak continues to have internal discussions and is talking with FRA on how to “handle this” and whether it will be part of the Amtrak annual grant. Tim is talking with Amtrak grants and Amtrak accounting.

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#### 2024 NGEN Backgrounder educational document:

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#### Industry Participation:

As of 8-6-24, industry involvement continues to remain steady. Currently there are around 200 industry participants.

#### Multi-state Venture Car Procurement as of 7-18-24:

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update into the record of today's meeting minutes.

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**Next Update: 9-3-24**

**Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement as of 7-18-24:**

On 7-18-24 Marci Petterson, CTDOT, reported to the NGEN Technical subcommittee that they are progressing well on the PDR on some systems. Truck clearance was ok'd by Metro-North which was good news.

Marci also noted that she has been getting some requests for information that she needs to get from Amtrak. She has reached out and connected with Dan Ruppert.

**Next Update – 9-3-24**

**Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement as reported on 8-6-24:**

Locomotives 301 and 302 are at Pueblo for type testing which is progressing well.

Locomotive 302 is in final assembly at the Siemens plant.

**Next Update – 9-3-24**

**Amtrak Vehicle Procurements as of 8-6-24:**

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**Status - Document Control Management as of 8-6-24:**

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**VIA Rail Equipment Procurement:**

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**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 8-6-24:**

No change to Caltrans status. All other slots are filled. Kyle Grading, 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 likely be re-convened in September.

**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.

On 7-18-24, the second in the monthly series of presentations took place:

"Rail Decarbonization: Overview of FRA Research on Advancing Clean Energy Technologies for Rail"

The presentation has been posted to the NGEC website and was distributed to Board members. (the file was rejected as too large for some servers – but can be viewed on the NGEC website).

**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 -9-3-24**

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**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

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**Agenda**

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 7-9-24 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 – timeline update Tammy Krause
9. Overview of FRA presentation to Technical subcommittee 7-18-24 Dan Ruppert  
*“Rail Decarbonization: Overview of FRA Research on Advancing Clean Energy Technologies for Rail”*
10. Update/Overview: NGEC/SPRC DC Fly-in Ray Hessinger
11. Treasurer’s Update Tim Ziethen
  - Balance/Spend Rate/Forecast
  - CRISI Grant Application – support letters/status
  - Funding: Next Steps
    - a). Funded/not funded
    - b). Other potential funding opportunities
    - c). Sub-contractor contracts – post 9-30-24
  - Status – Completing Prior Grant Close Out documents
12. Teams Meeting with Volpe Ray/Steve  
*re: NGEC Perspectives on policy options to help strengthen the health of the transit manufacturing industry*
13. Other: All
14. Adjourn Ray Hessinger

**Next Meeting: - 9-3-24**