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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

9-3-24

11:30 EASTERN

CONFERENCE CALL

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

### DECISIONS MADE

**1.**

**Welcome – Dan Ruppert, Vice Chair, NGEC Executive Board:**

Vice Chair Dan Ruppert, Amtrak, 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.

**Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement:**

Nothing new to report beyond the last report from Ray Hessinger on 8-6-24:

Locomotives 300 and 301 are at Pueblo for type testing which is progressing well.

Locomotive 302 is in final assembly at the Siemens plant.

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**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**

**4.**

**Approval of the Minutes from the 8-6-24 Meeting– Dan Ruppert:**

On a motion offered by Richard Kedzior, Wisconsin DOT, and seconded by Troy Hughes, MODOT, the minutes from the 8-6-24 meeting were approved as submitted.

**5.**

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

On 8-15-24, Ryan Sharpe provided the following update to the NGEC 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 FAI and FRA sample car inspections are complete, and the first cars are being prepared for conditional acceptance. The Cab Car 238.111(b) testing is complete, and the test report is in work. 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.*

Dan Ruppert, Amtrak, added that in the Mid-West two more café cars were accepted.

**6.**

**Update: CtDOT Rail Car Procurement – Steve Hewitt for Marci Petterson, CtDOT:**

As of 8-15-24, CTDOT was still working through finalizing PDR, and had an FAI of the engineer's seat.

**7.**

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

Dan Ruppert provided a brief update:

On the new Acela:

Qualification testing continues. All parties are working well together (Amtrak, the OEM and FRA). Multiple meetings are being held each week, some as frequently as daily. The hope is to have them all completed in the next few weeks.

All in all, the project continues to progress and the schedule is in line for arrival in Wilmington for testing next spring. With around 12 months of testing – hope to have revenue service by the following year.

On Airo:

This procurement is progressing well and is on schedule. There are 59 cars in production - 55 coach cars and 4 locomotives. A variety of FAIs are progressing – closing out some.

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 1-2 locomotives accepted per month.

Overall, this procurement is in a "steady state". Qualifying some FMIs and adjusting for PTC.

There is a significant amount of on-corridor testing when the corridor is available. A lot of work on the corridor -and track time is needed for a variety of other reasons which can cause some slow-downs but still progressing well towards completing the initial 75 base order with the 50-option order after.

On the GP38:

Progressing well – 19 in service with several on-site for conditional acceptance in Wilmington and Albany. “Moving along well.”

On the Long-Distance Trainsets:

Continues in the RFP process. It is moving along well with Amtrak working with carbuilders – with questions back and forth. One on ones are taking place as bids are being prepared.

## 8.

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

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

*The Mechanical WG met on Aug 13 to review the DCRs proposed for the single-level specification. They have not made a decision as of yet on those DCRs but they have agreed to meet every two weeks to review and decide on the DCRs. I do not have an approval from the Aug 27 meeting but hopefully they will come to decision in their Sept 10 meeting. Also, during this review, the working group realized the door section in the single-level spec is not as detailed as the bi-level spec. It was decided that a smaller task force would review the two specs and update the door section in the single level spec. Door experts are encouraged to volunteer for the task force.*

*The Communications Working Group is continuing their work on the DTL specs to be included in the various equipment specifications. They have completed a version of the DTL spec for inclusion in the trainset spec but holding off on submission until they see the final version for the single level spec as they are very similar. They are currently working on a version of the DTL specification for inclusion in the bi-level specification. This was just recently started and won't be complete for at least a few months.*

*The Materials WG has had a slow summer with little activity. However, the draft of the structural section for aluminum is nearly complete and the materials section will be mostly derivative from the requirements in the structural section so a draft will be easily assembled. The plan is to start meetings back up in September with a goal to finish the single car spec drafts by the end of November.*

*I have continued to meet weekly with the Technical Writer to work on the de-Amtraking the PRIIA specs.*

## 9.

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

Tim Ziethen provided the following update:

#### **Balance/Spend Rate Through June 2024**

Total Invoiced/Incurred (Including Carryover) - \$154,892.18  
Forecast/Accrual Amount to Reflect Billing Lag 60 days - \$30,000.  
Invoiced + Accrual Expenses to date (through March) – \$184,892.18  
Amtrak AOP Funding - \$260,000  
Remaining funds (total available less Invoiced + Accrual) - \$75,107.82  
Estimated full year (YTD Incl. Carry Over + FC + Remaining Months @ Avg Spend TD) – 201,265.68.  
Current Average Monthly Spend – just under \$16,373.50.

With this type of funding, a balance does not carry-over from one fiscal year to another.

#### **Status - CRISI Grant Application:**

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 Mehgan Histand, Amtrak Grants.**

CRISI Grant awards will not be announced until the October/November timeframe.

#### **Funding Next Steps post 9-30-24:**

Funded/Not Funded:

On the question of what happens after 9-30-24, Tim Ziethen noted that the preference remains getting a CRISI grant

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award, if not, Amtrak offered to potentially fund this year as a bridge, but as of now there is no mechanism going forward for this.

There is a sense that Amtrak may be able to take some of this on – but it would have to come from the Amtrak Annual Grant – and, according to Amtrak, doing that would mean not funding something else.

Tim noted that there has been some discussion of holding a special Board meeting solely to discuss this issue and he recommends that this should be the case.

Steve Hewitt noted that he has had discussions with Ray Hessinger, NGEC Chair, and he agreed that it was likely that a special one-topic meeting on funding/financing the NGEC should take place on what would have normally been the bi-weekly meeting of the Board in two weeks on 9-17-24 at 11:30am Eastern.

Hearing no objection, Steve will send a calendar notice to Board members and those colleagues that regularly attend these meetings.

Tim asked George Hull, Amtrak CMO, who had called in to participate in the meeting, if he had more to add about the situation.

George deferred to Mike Murray, FRA.

Mike Murray noted “one area we are looking at is, from a flexing point of view, having Amtrak managing the grant. There are no other options available now. Amtrak could parcel resources necessary to keep the NGEC working without additional hurdles such as discussing grants or other types of funds and with an opportunity for some stability to be involved and up to date...would move us past a year-to-year approach.”

George Hull asked, “How do I interpret managing the grant?”

The response was “using Amtrak funds under the annual appropriation.”

George commented “to do so under my budget will be a challenge. The ops budget for professional fees has been zeroed out...Amtrak appropriations are not where we should be...there is some misunderstanding also about what we get from the IJA.”

George continued, “I need to give something else up to fund the NGEC...there is no line item – although it is requested. I need FRA to tell me to do it, so that I can justify this with Amtrak finance and other partners.”

George added that if Amtrak were to take on the funding of the NGEC, there would need to be By-Law changes because the scope that is in the current NGEC By-Laws is too broad and could not be carried out.

George noted, “I am willing to do this (take on the NGEC) but I need clarity in the By-Laws.”

“For now,” George noted “I am willing to go month-to-month while we sort this all out on how to go forward.”

Tim Ziethen commented that this is consistent with the talks going on with FRA. The NGEC should carry on with the status quo and the contracts/sub-contracts can be extended with cancellation for convenience clauses – which are standard and would mean that if no funding is available there is a mechanism to cancel the contract.

Amtrak is committed to work through it and “figure it out”. Tim added “Amtrak is supportive and wants to help and partner with the states to do it.” It is intended that the NGEC be “kept alive and current.”

Tim will follow up with FRA.

Tim added, “the message is - don’t shut-down – we will figure out a path forward.”

Also, Tim emphasized that there still is a chance for a CRISI grant to be approved.

Steve Hewitt pointed out to Tim Ziethen that the FASC is meeting next Wednesday, 9-11-24, and part of that meeting should be the discussion of By-Law changes that Amtrak would like considered. The FASC is the right body to begin this process. A review had begun, but the Amtrak changes are unknown. This would be the perfect opportunity. .

As agreed earlier, there will be a special Executive Board Meeting 9-17-24 at 11:30am Eastern. It will be solely on this issue - funding/financing the NGEC. Steve will send a meeting notice out to all calendars and add George Hull to the meeting invite.

Since AASHTO was not represented on this call, Steve Hewitt and Tim Ziethen will schedule a “quick call” with

AASHTO's reps to discuss where things stand and what needs to be put in place in the short term.

Tim will provide date and times for the call and Steve will schedule it.

**Note: Following today's meeting, the AASHTO call was scheduled for 9-5-24 at 3:00pm Eastern.**

**10.**

**Summary/Overview - Teams Meeting (8-8-24) with Volpe – Ray/Steve:**

Ray Hessinger and Steve Hewitt met with Anna Solow-Collins, Benjamin Jaffer and several others from Volpe on August 8<sup>th</sup> to get the NGEC perspective on policy options to help strengthen the health of the transit manufacturing industry.

The 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 the NGEC experience they were looking to include our perspective on the issue.

Questions included:

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*

Ray Hessinger gave them an overview from the perspective of the passenger rail aspect. He and Steve gave them background on the NGEC's mission and its accomplishments. They reported on the successful development of six passenger rail vehicle specifications and the extensive use of those specs by entities across North America. Ray noted that he believed that the health of the passenger rail industry is improving, overall, and that there are a lot of procurements in progress. He knows of no passenger rail procurements that are taking place in the US that are not using NGEC specifications as the base spec.

Steve and Ray described the NGEC as a success story in having built an incredible coalition of states, Amtrak, FRA and over 200 representatives of the passenger rail equipment manufacturing and supply industry all working together to develop standardized specifications. They also described the organization of the NGEC and its development of a comprehensive document management process.

They also reported to Volpe that there are currently representatives of several transit authorities involved with the NGEC through its technical subcommittee as members of the industry participants group. Several of those agencies are using NGEC specification including Metro-North and Long Island Railroad. Steve also noted that Volpe has been involved with the NGEC from the beginning with Brian Marquis heading up one of the technical working groups (VTI) and several others participating in various capacities.

They also discussed the NGEC's success in getting to where it has with limited funding of just over \$4 million over 15 years. At the present time, with funds so limited the NGEC is primarily focused on maintaining and updating the six vehicle specs and the many reference (sub-specs) specifications to keep them current and relevant, while also developing a lessons learned/best practices - living document to assist states or entities who are looking to procure passenger rail equipment.

Volpe seemed satisfied and appreciative of what they had learned and would get follow up if they had any other questions or areas of interest about the work of the NGEC.

**11.**

**Next FRA Presentation to NGEC Technical subcommittee 9-26-24 – Steve Hewitt:**

The September FRA R&D presentation will be 9-26-24. Steve Hewitt encouraged members of the Executive Board who are not on the Technical subcommittee to join the meeting on 9-26-24 if they can.

**Topic: The Locomotive Crashworthiness Research Program**

*Presenter: Patricia Llana, Mechanical Engineer, Structures & Dynamics Division*

*The presentation will feature an overview of the Train Occupant Protection Research Program on crashworthiness. A series of tests were completed that successfully developed and verified a crash energy management system (CEM) that can be retrofit onto existing locomotives. Through extensive computer simulations validated by multiple full-scale dynamic impact tests, the program has demonstrated that employing CEM on locomotives greatly reduces the propensity for derailment and override, while absorbing collision energy*

*in a controlled, predictable manner.*

**13.**

**Other/Adjourn – Dan Ruppert:**

With no other business forthcoming, Vice Chair Dan Ruppert adjourned the 9-3-24 meeting of the Executive Board at 12:16pm Eastern.

**Next Executive Board Meeting Special Session - 9-17-24**

**Decisions/Action Items**

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

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**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. 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 Histand, Amtrak Grants.**

CRISI Grant awards will not be announced until the October/November timeframe.

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

(See complete discussion above)

With funding ending on 9-30-24, Amtrak will cover NGEC expenses on a month-to-month basis while trying to work out a potential solution internally and with FRA and a special Board meeting is being scheduled for 9-17-24. To discuss funding./financing the NGEC.

**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).

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**Industry Participation:**

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

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Dan Ruppert, Amtrak, added that in the Mid-West two more café cars were accepted.

**Next Update: 10-1-24**

**Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement as of 8-15-24 as presented to the Board on 9-3-24:**

As of 8-15-24, CTDOT was still working through finalizing PDR, and had an FAI of the engineer's seat.

**Next Update: 10-1-24**

**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 – 10-1-24**

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On the new Acela:

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Continues in the RFP process. It is moving along well with Amtrak working with carbuilders – with questions back and forth. One on ones are taking place as bids are being prepared.

**Next Update – 10-1-24**

**Status - Document Control Management as of 9-3-24:**

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*I have continued to meet weekly with the Technical Writer to work on the de-Amtrak the PRIIA specs.*

**Next Update – 10-1-24**

**VIA Rail Equipment Procurement:**

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

**Next Update – 2025 NGEAC 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 9-3-24:**

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.

**Next FRA Presentation to NGEAC Technical subcommittee 9-26-24 – Steve Hewitt:**

The September FRA R&D presentation will be Sep 26, 2024. Steve Hewitt encouraged members of the Executive Board who are not on the Technical subcommittee to join the meeting on 9-26-24 if they can.

**Topic: The Locomotive Crashworthiness Research Program**

*Presenter: Patricia Llana, Mechanical Engineer, Structures & Dynamics Division*

*The presentation will feature an overview of the Train Occupant Protection Research Program on crashworthiness. A series of tests were completed that successfully developed and verified a crash energy management system (CEM) that can be retrofit onto existing locomotives. Through extensive computer simulations validated by multiple full-scale dynamic impact tests, the program has demonstrated that employing CEM on locomotives greatly reduces the propensity for derailment and override, while absorbing collision energy in a controlled, predictable manner.*

**2025 NGEAC 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.



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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 -9-17-24**

**NGEC Executive Board Meeting**

**9-3-24**

**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   | Dan Ruppert    |
| 2. Roll call  | Steve Hewitt   |
| 3. Action Items Status Review   | Steve Hewitt   |
| 4. Approval of Minutes from 8-6-24 meeting  | Dan Ruppert    |
| 5. Update: Multi State Venture Car Procurement  | Kyle Gradinger |
| 6. Update: CtDOT Rail Car Procurements  | Steve Hewitt   |
| 7. Update: Amtrak Vehicle Procurements  | Dan Ruppert    |
| 8. Update: Document Control<br>Status and Timeline for Single Level Spec update<br>Status and Timeline for completion of Technical writing (De-Amtrak) Reference Specs  | Tammy Krause   |
| 9. Treasurer's Update<br>- Balance/Spend Rate/Forecast<br>- CRISI Grant Application – support letters/status<br>- Funding: Next Steps post 9-30-24<br>a). Funded/not funded<br>b). Sub-contractor contracts<br>c) Special Board Meeting 9-17-24 ? Focus on Funding issues | Tim Ziethen    |
| 10. Summary/Overview – 8-8-24 Teams Meeting with Volpe  | Steve          |
| 11. Next FRA Presentation to NGEC Technical subcommittee 9-26-24<br><i>Locomotive Crashworthiness Research Program</i>  | Steve Hewitt   |
| 12. Other:  | All            |
| 13. Adjourn   | Dan Ruppert    |

**Next Meeting: 9-17-24 ?**

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