



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

NGEC FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE

MINUTES

JULY 17, 2024

3:00PM EASTERN

TEAMS MEETING

FACILITATOR	<i>Tim Ziethen, Chair of the S305 Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)</i>
ATTENDEES	<i>Tim Ziethen, Tim Ziethen as proxy for Mike Murray and as proxy for Brian Beeler II, Melina Lopez, Melina Lopez also as proxy for Amanda Martin, Troy Hughes, Steve Hewitt, Strat Cavros, Shayne Gill, Barley Fields</i>
ABSENTEES	<i>Mike Murray, Amanda Martin, Brian Beeler II, Ray Hessinger, Larry Salci</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 5-22-24 meeting – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak

On a motion by Melina Lopez, IDOT, and a second by Troy Hughes, MODOT, the minutes from 5-22-24 were approved as submitted.

4. Treasurer’s Report – 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 April) – \$132,923.49
 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

Strat Cavros, AASHTO, reported that the May invoice would be for \$23,905. And would be submitted shortly. The increase in the monthly invoice was due to expenses for the Annual Meeting coming in.

Tim will include this in his totals through May. He added that it still leaves the monthly average spending near the anticipated \$15,000 and there remains plenty of money left for the remainder of the performance period.

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

Tim Ziethen reported that Amtrak is completing the last document to be submitted to close out the prior grant. It is a summary document which Steve Hewitt helped put together (along with Tim Ziethen). It goes to Amtrak's grants office and needs sign-off from the Amtrak VP and Treasurer. The summary sheet is the narrative that tells the story of the NGEC's accomplishments during the grant performance period and provides a look ahead to activities the NGEC would take on moving forward.

Tim anticipates that the documents will be uploaded to FRA within the next day or two.

6.
Status: Quarterly Report (period ending 6-30-24) – Tim Ziethen/Steve Hewitt:

Tim noted that the report is due internally by July 31, 2024. He explained that, although there is no requirement to prepare these quarterly progress reports or a specific due date since this funding came from the Amtrak AOP but the intent is to continue to follow the same process for internal purposes.

Steve Hewitt stated that he has completed the quarterly milestones report and attached it, as usual, to the Monthly Activities report for June 2024. He will send it to Tim and to AASHTO (for posting to the website) following this meeting.

7.
CRISI Grant Application – Tim Ziethen:

The CRISI Grant Application for funding the NGEC was submitted on time to the portal. It included many letters of support. Tim does not have the exact number, but it was a good representation. Tim reminded FASC members that **it is not too late to send in support letters. They should be sent to Tim Ziethen and Meghan Hestand, Amtrak Grants or to Steve Hewitt and Tim Ziethen to be forwarded to 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 – November being the most likely.

8.
Discussion: Next steps if funded/not funded – clarification on current funding – Tim:

Tim Ziethen addressed the issue of what is next if Amtrak does not receive a CRISI Grant for the NGEC.

He has been talking with Mike Murray, FRA about what other options there are for Amtrak if it is to fund the NGEC as a stop gap. Amtrak wants to have flexibility in what funding source it would be able to use. There are numerous buckets of funds that Amtrak has and it would like to know its choices if funds the NGEC again. Amtrak is looking for flexibility.

Discussions internally at Amtrak and with FRA are ongoing. If it is to be funded and managed by Amtrak to benefit everyone participating. They will need to determine the structure that will be needed and the efficiencies necessary to support the NGEC's mission. What would it look like?

Tim added that this is still considered a fallback position if CRISI funding is not awarded. He added "this is not an emergency – but we are having the right conversations...hopefully the decision and strategy will be determined within the next 30-60 days...with no break in NGEC Activities."

In the event that none of this comes to fruition "we will look at other possible options" including things that while not easy to do, none of these options are forbidden. The only thing forbidden is lobbying.

Discussion:

Steve Hewitt asked if Tim had determined whether the current funds from the AOP can be used until expended or will it expire at the end of FY 24 (9-30-24). Tim responded that as an operating expense it does not automatically carry over into the next fiscal year. It is viewed as a fiscal year authorization.

Shayne Gill, AASHTO, commented that he has been getting notified/reminded within AASHTO that the sub-contractor agreements are "up". He noted he still needs to talk to Strat Cavros, AASHTO, but he is trying to figure out steps to get those agreements extended with some kind of contingency clause. He is looking for the right language along the lines of "upon receiving funds". He added that he was looking for the right language

and was doing his "due diligence".

Strat Cavros noted that Shayne was close on the language – it would normally say "subject to availability of funds".

Steve Hewitt commented that he had received the notice about the agreement ending and asked if he was correct in understanding that the agreements under the current language run through the end of the fiscal year – 9-30-24. Strat Cavros confirmed that Steve was correct.

Tim Ziethen commented that the agreements frequently have clauses allowing them to be canceled "for convenience" with a usual notification period of 30-60 days. The intent is to position these things properly and manage them.

**9.
Review of NGECE 2-pager for 2025 – Steve Hewitt:**

Steve Hewitt suggested that a first review of the two-pager for updating it for 2025 should begin with him and Amanda Martin as a starting point (in-line with how it has been done in the past). Steve will take a first look and send his comments to Amanda. The timeline would be to provide recommendations to the FASC by the September meeting and for the FASC to make recommendations to the Executive Board by the end of October.

Tim agreed and told Steve to proceed as planned.

Steve Hewitt asked Troy Hughes if MODOT graphic arts would be willing, once again, to handle the formatting and printing of the two-pager once all changes were determined. Troy responded that MODOT would take it on again.

Thank you MODOT!

**10.
Annual By-Laws Review – Steve Hewitt:**

The NGECE By-Laws are reviewed each year to determine whether they are still in line with the NGECE's mission. The FASC is the body which makes recommendations to the Executive Board – either providing recommended changes or recommending no changes.

Similar to the NGECE two-pager, the process usually begins with Steve Hewitt and the second vice-chair (Amanda Martin). Steve will review first and send his recommendations to Amanda. Amanda and Steve will provide the full FASC with recommendations by the end of September -with the FASC making recommendations to the Executive Board by the end of October 2024. If changes are recommended, the Board will need to have those changes in writing 30 days prior to voting on them.

It was agreed that Steve Hewitt should proceed as planned.

**11.
Other issues/questions – All:**

With no other business forthcoming, Tim Ziethen adjourned the call at 3:30 pm Eastern.

**Next Meeting
8-14-24**

Decisions - Action Items

Balance/Spend Rate Through April 2024

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Finalizing Prior Grant Closeout Documents – Tim Ziethen:

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Tim anticipates that the documents will be uploaded to FRA within the next day or two.

Future Funding for the NGEC:

CRISI Grant Application:

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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 – November being the most likely.

Next steps if funded/not funded – clarification on current funding:

Tim Ziethen addressed the issue of what is next if Amtrak does not receive a CRISI Grant for the NGEC.

He has been talking with Mike Murray, FRA about what other options there are for Amtrak if it is to fund the NGEC as a stop gap. Amtrak wants to have flexibility in what funding source it would be able to use. There are numerous buckets of funds that Amtrak has and it would like to know its choices if funds the NGEC again. Amtrak is looking for flexibility.

Discussions internally at Amtrak and with FRA are ongoing. If it is to be funded and managed by Amtrak to benefit everyone participating. They will need to determine the structure that will be needed and the efficiencies necessary to support the NGEC's mission. What would it look like?

Tim added that this is still considered a fallback position if CRISI funding is not awarded. He added "this is not an emergency – but we are having the right conversations...hopefully the decision and strategy will be determined within the next 30-60 days...with no break in NGEC Activities."

The AOP funds are not usually carried over, they are viewed as a fiscal year authorization.

Sub-contractors status. AASHTO is looking into language to extend subcontractor agreements beyond 9-30-24 – something like "subject to availability of funds".

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. In the event that none of this comes to fruition "we will look at other possible options" including things that While not easy to do, none of these options are forbidden. The only thing forbidden is lobbying.

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.

To date: 487 copies (hard and electronic) have been distributed.

NGEC 2025 two-pager:

Steve Hewitt, NGEN Manager, and Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT, will take a first look at the two-pager and make recommendations for updates to the FASC by the September meeting and for the FASC to make recommendations to the Executive Board by the end of October.
<p>2024 Annual By-Laws Review:</p> <p>Steve Hewitt and Amanda Martin will take the first look at the By-Laws and make recommendations for any needed changes to the FASC by the end of September -with the FASC making recommendations to the Executive Board by the end of October2024. If changes are recommended, the Board will need to have those changes in writing 30 days prior to voting on them.</p>
<p>Quarterly Report (period ending 6-30-24):</p> <p>This report is will be completed by Steve Hewitt and Tim Ziethen by 7-31-24.</p>
<p>Next Meeting 8-14-24</p>

ATTACHMENTS



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Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

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Meeting ID: 218 969 011 071

Passcode: r7bGDN

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AGENDA
7-17-24
3:00PM Eastern

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|---|--------------|
| 1. Welcome/Open | Tim Ziethen |
| 2. Roll Call | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approval – Minutes from 5-22-24 | Tim Ziethen |
| 4. Treasurer’s Update | Tim Ziethen |
| Update - Balance/Spend Rate/Forecast | |
| 5. Status: Submitting Prior Grant Close Out Documents | Tim Ziethen |
| 6. Status: Quarterly Report (period ending 6-30-24) | Tim/Steve |

7. CRISI Grant Application – support letters status
8. Discussion: Next Steps if funded/not funded – clarification on current funding Tim Ziethen
9. Review of NGEC two-pager for 2025 Steve Hewitt
10. Annual By-Laws Review – timeline Steve Hewitt
11. Other Issues/Questions All

Next Meeting 8-14-24