



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

# NGEC FINANCE and ADMINISTRATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE

MINUTES

OCTOBER 23, 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, Brian Beeler II, Mike Murray, Melina Lopez, Troy Hughes, Troy Hughes also as proxy for Amanda Martin, Amanda Villani, Steve Hewitt, Strat Cavros, Barley Fields</i>
<b>ABSENTEES</b>	<i>Amanda Martin, 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 7-17-24 and 8-14-24 meetings – Tim Ziethen, Amtrak**

On a motion by Melina Lopez, IDOT and a second offered by Troy Hughes, MODOT, the minutes from 7-17-24 and 8-14-24 were approved as submitted.

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

Tim Ziethen provided the following update:

Current balance/spend rate through August 2024:

Total Invoiced/Incurred (Including Carryover) - \$170,040.93  
 Forecast/Accrual Amount to Reflect Billing Lag 60 days - \$30,000.  
 Invoiced + Accrual Expenses to date (through August 2024) – \$200,040.93  
 Amtrak AOP Funding - \$260,000  
 Remaining funds (total available less Invoiced + Accrual) - \$59,959.07  
 Estimated full year (YTD Incl. Carry Over + FC + Remaining Months @ Avg Spend TD) – 185,267.27.  
 Current Average Monthly Spend – \$14,773.66.

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

**5. Funding Discussion - Tim Ziethen:**

Discuss potential options – gap funding or long-term absent CRISI:  
 Tim Ziethen asked Mike Murray, FRA, if he had heard anything on the CRISI Grant award announcements.

Mike responded that he had no information. Tim reiterated that the anticipated timeline is October/November, so there is still some time left.

Amtrak Governmental Affairs perspective:

Tim Ziethen reported that he has had conversations with Amtrak Legal about "using 209" to fund the NGEC and it was deemed to be a heavier lift as the agreements in place currently have only recently been updated and there is no mechanism to make changes that would be needed to include the NGEC. Any change to be considered would have to be negotiated. "This (using 209) is not an obvious or quick solution".

Tim reported that he has had discussions with Amtrak Government Affairs and there is some enthusiasm for finding a way to keep the NGEC going. Tim stated that Government Affairs has asked for a one-page summary or white paper on the accomplishments to date and plans for going forward. Tim noted that he has the framework of a one-pager but needs to have a discussion with Steve Hewitt. Tim also noted that he had a call with Steve last week, and he wants to have another discussion before completing the draft one-pager. Once it is ready, he has to go back to Government Affairs and "up the line" for feedback.

Revising the NGEC By-Laws – proposed changes:

Just prior to today's call, Tim sent Steve Hewitt a draft (version 3) of a marked up set of By-Laws with changes that Amtrak would be recommending. Since no one, including Steve, had seen this document (it was sent to Steve moments before the FASC meeting began) it was agreed that the best thing would be to have Tim share his screen and walk through the proposed By-Law changes.

During the course of the overview, there were few comments as members were seeing these proposed changes for the first time.

Steve Hewitt weighed in on a specific proposal that would eliminate states' ability to designate specific contractors as their alternate if they are unavailable for a meeting. Steve explained that this was put in the By-Laws intentionally for states usually with small staffs and it was used only on the Technical subcommittee where staff expertise may be limited. It does occur periodically on the Executive Board as well but is most prevalent on the Technical subcommittee.

Tim agreed to re-write this proposed change to better address this issue.

After going through all of the proposed changes, Tim asked Steve Hewitt what the next steps should be. Steve recommended that the FASC members have time to review the proposed changes and offer comments between now and the next FASC meeting scheduled for 11-6-24. Steve noted that once the FASC has approved the proposed changes for submittal to the Executive Board (possibly on 11-6-24) they would need to be sent to Board members in writing and the Board must have them in their possession for 30 days before voting on what has been proposed. Steve will look at the calendar and provide an accurate timeline but note it will be tight to get these changes approved before the latest 3-month gap funding expires (12-31-24).

Tim stated that he understood the timeframe and he believes Amtrak would be able to cover a short period beyond 12-31-24 if necessary.

In the meantime, he will make the change suggested and send Steve a version 4 of the By-Law proposed changes. Steve will distribute that document to the FASC members.

Steve also recommended that Tim Ziethen provide the Executive Board (10-29-24) with a brief summary of what Amtrak's thinking is in order to give members a heads up and to explain the timeline and process. Steve will be meeting with the NGEC Chair (Ray Hessinger) on 10-24-24 and will share this discussion with him and a copy of the proposed (version 3) By-Law changes prepared by Amtrak.

Determining whether to have an Annual Meeting – on 1-30-25 in DC hybrid? Or virtual at another date:

Tim noted that one of the recommended By-Law changes would include the possibility of have the Annual meetings held virtually to "bend the cost curve down" and that if an in-person meeting were to take place, all attendees would cover their own travel expenses.

Steve Hewitt commented that the deadline for letting AASHTO know whether there was to be a hybrid meeting on 1-30-25 as currently scheduled is 11-15-24. Steve believes it is getting to be pretty obvious that an in-person meeting is becoming less likely for this coming year, and that if it were to be virtual it would need to be on a different date because most state members would be in DC/Crystal City that week for other meetings and would be traveling home the day of the NGEC meeting. The meeting as scheduled now is on

the afternoon of the last day of 4 days of meetings with other rail related organizations and most would need to stay an extra night if they stayed for the NGECC meeting. It is unreasonable to expect them to stay an extra night for a virtual meeting.

Steve also noted that if the funding issue has not been fully resolved by the time of the Annual Meeting, it would not be appropriate or efficient to have those types of discussions with 70 or so members of the industry (non-voting members) in attendance, The Board would potentially need to go into executive session.

Steve will raise all of this with Ray Hessinger on Thursday (10-24-24), and it should be a discussion topic on next week's Executive Board meeting.

Review of NGECC two-pager for 2025:

As for developing an updated NGECC two-pager educational document, Steve noted that this has been put on hold until a decision on the future of the NGECC has been made.

One-page

Steve Hewitt commented that what he has been saying regarding process and timeline, etc. should be only considered advice, and that he states, and FRA should weigh in as it is ultimately their decision. Most of the states on the call noted that they concurred with the recommended timeline and process.

Tim Ziethen will have a call with Steve Hewitt, hopefully in the next day or two to go over the one-page white paper to go to Government Affairs, and Steve will also have reviewed the proposed By-Law changes and comment on them.

Steve also noted that items such as the white paper do not need to follow the 30-day process that proposed By-Law changes follows. These types of issues can be considered whenever the Board is ready to take them up.

**6.  
Other issues/questions – All:**

With no other business forthcoming, Tim Ziethen adjourned the call at around 3:40pm Eastern.

**Next Meeting  
11-6-24**

**Decisions - Action Items**

**Current balance/spend rate through August 2024:**

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**Future Funding for the NGECC:**

**CRISI Grant Application:**

The CRISI Grant Application for funding the NGECC was submitted on time to the portal. It included many letters of support, but Tim reminded FASC members, **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. CRISI Grant awards will not be announced until the October/November timeframe – November being the most likely.

**Future Funding:**

See discussion under item 5 above.

Actions:

Steve Hewitt and Tim Ziethen will have a call either 10-24-24 or 10-25-24 to discuss the draft white paper which will describe the NGEC's accomplishments to date and its plans for the future.

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

**NGEC 2025 two-pager:**

This item is on hold until decisions on the future of the NGEC are made.

**2024 Annual By-Laws Review:**

See discussion under agenda item 5 above.

Action:

Tim Ziethen will send a draft (version 4) to Steve Hewitt and it will be distributed to all FASC members.

Steve will discuss the proposed changes with Ray Hessinger on 10-24-24 and Tim will plan to give the Board a "heads-up" on the changes to the By-Laws that Amtrak will be proposing and on the timeline.

**Annual Meeting:**

This item is on hold until decisions on the future of the NGEC are made. AASHTO needs to be apprised by 11-15-24 as to whether the Annual Meeting for 2025 will take place on 1-30-25 as currently scheduled.

**Next Meeting  
11-6-24**

**ATTACHMENTS**



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

**Finance and Administrative Subcommittee (FASC)**

Microsoft Teams meeting

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

**Microsoft Teams**  
**[Join the meeting now](#)**  
**Meeting ID: 283 885 585 093**  
**Passcode: yPNAKh**

**AGENDA**  
**10-23-24**  
**3:00PM Eastern**

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Welcome/Open   | Tim Ziethen  |
| 2. Roll Call  | Steve Hewitt |
| 3. Approval – Minutes from 7-17-24 and 8-14-24  | Tim Ziethen  |
| 4. Treasurer’s Update   | Tim Ziethen  |
| Update - Balance/Spend Rate/Forecast  |              |
| 5. Funding Discussion   | Tim Ziethen  |
| Discuss potential options – gap funding or long-term absent CRISI:                                  |              |
| Amtrak Governmental Affairs perspective   |              |
| Developing a work plan for long-term  |              |
| Revising the NGEC By-Laws – proposed changes  |              |
| Determining whether to have an Annual Meeting – on 1-30-25 in DC hybrid? Or virtual at another date |              |
| Review of NGEC two-pager for 2025?  |              |
| 6. Other Issues/Questions   | All          |

**Next Meeting 11-6-24**