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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

12-10-24

11:30 EASTERN

CONFERENCE CALL

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

### DECISIONS MADE

#### 1.

##### **Welcome – Ray Hessinger, 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.

##### **Ongoing Items Status Review of items not on today's agenda – Steve Hewitt:**

##### **Industry Participants as of 12-10-24:**

Staying steady at around 200.

##### **NGEC two-pager:**

2024 version – 488 distributed (Electronic and hard copy).

**Currently, updating the two-pager for 2025 is on hold until there is further clarity as to the future of the NGEC.**

##### **Multi State Venture Car Procurement as of 10-10-24:**

*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 have been conditionally accepted. The Cab Car 238.111(b) testing is complete, and the test report is nearly complete. The IDOT café cars are being shipped to Chicago and placed into revenue service as available.*

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

Steve Hewitt noted that Caltrans has not provided an update on this procurement since 10-10-24, and asked

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Sarah Hernandez to mention this to Kyle Gradinger to see if an update could be available for the next Board meeting (or the Technical Subcommittee meeting on 12-19-24).

**Next Update: as available**

**CtDOT Rail Car Procurement as of 11-7-24 and reported to the Technical subcommittee on that date:**

*We're working on reviewing and approving the last of the PDR documents. Planning for in person IDR meetings with the design team in December 2024 and January 2025.*

**Next Update: as appropriate**

**Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement as of 11-21-24:**

The first two Locomotives had been delivered to Metro-North at Croton Harmon, NY in late October 2024 and were starting the process of inspection for acceptance.

**Next Update: as appropriate**

**Amtrak Vehicle Procurements as of 11-7-24 and reported to the Technical subcommittee on that date:**

On the new Acela:

All is moving along at a steady rate – they are working on final qualification testing and going forward with training.

On Airo:

This procurement is progressing well and is on schedule for spring 2025 for testing the first trainset on the corridor. There are 72 coach cars and 7 locomotives in production.

On the ALC 42:

Dan reported that this procurement continues at a steady state – averaging one or two a month. There are 64 in service out of a base order of 75. There will be a little slower rate going forward as they turn to the option order of 50.

On the Long-Distance Trainsets:

Continues as an active RFP. Amtrak is continuing to work with carbuilders with a goal of an award next year.

On the GP38 – 10 are in production, 5 are on site and 21 of 36 have been conditionally accepted. (Nothing new reported on this procurement on 11-7-24.)

**Next Update: as appropriate**

**FRA Research Presentation Series:**

The November presentation was given on 11-7-24 to the Technical Subcommittee by Anand Prabhakaran, Sharma and Associates on:

"Overview of FRA's Glazing Retention Research"

The PowerPoint presentation from 11-7-24 will be provided to Steve Hewitt and distributed to members and to SAASHTO for posting to the NGEC website.

**Next Presentation: Second Tech SC meeting in January 2025.**

**4. Approval of the Minutes from the 11-26-24 Meeting– Ray Hessinger:**

On a motion offered by Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT, and seconded by Richard Kedzior, Wisconsin DOT, the minutes from the 11-26-24 meeting were approved as submitted.

**5. Treasurer's Report and Funding Discussion – Dan Ruppert for Tim Ziethen:**

Balance/spend rate through September 2024:

Total Invoiced/Incurred (Including Carryover) - \$176,756.44  
Accrual Amount to Reflect Billing Lag 60 days – \$7,530.66  
invoiced + Accrual Expenses to date (through September 2024) – \$184,287.10  
Amtrak AOP Funding - \$260,000  
Average Monthly Spend – \$14,729.70.

This closes out the FY24 funding provided by Amtrak Operating Expenses (AOP). Funding balance does not carry over year to year.

Funding committed to the NGEC and allocated by Amtrak Finance is \$100,000 for FY25. Based on the average spend rate, this funding should take the NGEC through 3-31-25. The \$100,000, however, is available until expended.

**Status: Internal Amtrak Discussions on Future Funding for the NGEC – Amtrak Gov’t Affairs/Legal:**

Tim Ziethen reported that he has had internal discussions with Government Affairs and Legal to resolve the issue of what funding, if any, is available beyond the \$100,000 provided thus far by Amtrak Finance.

Tim added that he had hoped to get this done before calling FRA to discuss several potential funding options – and, in particular, the concept of a set-aside or “hold-back” of funds from Capital grants for the NGEC.

Holidays have made it more difficult to have the internal discussions – but Tim is hopeful that he will get more information this week.

**6.**

**Status: Document Control – priority efforts – Tammy Krause:**

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

*Due to the current unknown future of PRIIA, I am working with the Tech Writer to de-Amtrak as many sub-specs as possible that can be completed in time to be approved by the TSC and EB by the end of March.*

*The Single-Level specification will be completed as soon as the Mechanical WG can finish their last DCR. They are waiting on some information from AAR. This should be completed by March 2025.*

*The Vehicle Weight WG should have their document approved in the WG by Thursday. It will then be submitted to the Technical Subcommittee.*

**7.**

**Adjourn – Ray Hessinger:**

With no other business forthcoming, Chairman Hessinger adjourned the 12-10-24 meeting of the NGEC Executive Board at 11:47AM Eastern and announced that due to the holiday season, the next meeting of the Executive Board will be on 1-7-25.

Steve Hewitt added that the FASC will not meet on 12-18-24 also due to holidays and to allow for more time for internal Amtrak discussions. The FASC will next meet on 1-15-25.

**Next Executive Board Meeting 1-7-25**

**Decisions/Action Items**

**Funding the NGEC – Next steps/actions as of 12-10-24**

**By-Law changes and funding options:**

The FASC determined that revising the By-laws with the edits suggested by Amtrak is premature and should be held off until further understanding of whether there will be funding beyond 3-31-25 and where it will come from. By-Law changes can be addressed at that time if needed. Amtrak is proposing some tightening up of proxies, some tweaking in

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the language to de-emphasize some of the items that the Committee has yet to take on (ownership etc.) and flexibility by changing language in certain cases from shall to may.

**Status:** Review of the By-Laws is on hold pending the future of the NGE.

**209 option:**

Tim Ziethen reported that he has had internal discussions with Amtrak Legal and there is not a lot of optimism for this concept – at least not as a quick fix. It would take a long time to execute this option.

**Status:** This is not seen as a likely “fix” as noted above.

**Gap Funding:**

Amtrak Finance has committed \$100,000 to funding the NGE retroactive to 10-1-24 through 3-31-25 or until expended.

**Amtrak Government Affairs:**

Amtrak Government Affairs had asked for a white paper on what the NGE is, what it has accomplished and what it plans to do. The white paper, along with the NGE “two-pager” educational document was provided on 10-28-24. Status of where this effort stands is unknown.

**Status:** Tim Ziethen is having follow-up discussions with Government Affairs and with Amtrak Legal to see if there are additional internal options.

Tim will follow up with a reach out to Mike Murray, FRA once he has resolved the internal discussions.

**Potential Long-Term Option:**

On 11-20-24, the FASC discussed the possibility of obtaining long-term funds for the NGE by adding a “take down” to grants FRA provides for passenger rail equipment. A minimal amount of ½ or ¼ of 1 percent of one grant would fund the NGE very well. This would be a new twist on getting funding “from the powers that be”.

Tim Ziethen noted that there is precedence as there is a “hold-back” in grants that Amtrak receives that would go for certain requirements. Taking this kind of approach for NGE funding seems reasonable. Tim added that a “capping clause” could be included to align funding with the work or mission of the NGE. The FASC will discuss this further on their next call (12-5-24).

**Status:** Tim Ziethen will follow-up on this concept with a discussion with FRA after determining the Amtrak internal perspective on this.

**NGE 2025 Annual Meeting:**

**Status:** The 1-30-25 NGE in-person Annual meeting has been **canceled** due to the limited funding provided to date and the need to prioritize expenditures.

Steve Hewitt will notify AASHTO’s meeting planning of the decision to cancel the in-person meeting. Steve will also inform the NGE members and industry participants.

A virtual meeting may be held at a date and time yet to be determined. Ray Hessinger and Steve Hewitt will discuss as the funding picture becomes clear.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

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

Total Invoiced/Incurred (Including Carryover) - \$176,756.44  
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invoiced + Accrual Expenses to date (through September 2024) – \$184,287.10  
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through 3-31-25 based on its average spend-rate. It is available until expended.

**2024 NGECEC 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 NGECEC website [www.ngec.org](http://www.ngec.org).

To date: 488 copies have been distributed (hard/soft).

**Status:** The process for updating the two-pager for 2025 remains on hold until there is a better sense of the future of the NGECEC beyond 12-31-24.

**Industry Participation:**

As of 12-10-24, industry involvement continues to remain steady. Currently there are around 200 industry participants.

**Multi-state Venture Car Procurement as of 10-10-24:**

*All coach type FDR and FAI stages are complete, including Cab Car and Café Car.*

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**Status:** Steve Hewitt noted, on 12-10-24, that Caltrans has not provided an update on this procurement since 10-10-24, and asked Sarah Hernandez to mention this to Kyle Grading to see if an update could be available for the next Board meeting (or the Technical Subcommittee meeting on 12-19-24).

**Next Update:** as provided

**Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement as of 11-7-24:**

From Marci Petterson, CtDOT: *We're working on reviewing and approving the last of the PDR documents. Planning for in person IDR meetings with the design team in December 2024 and January 2025.*

**Next Update:** as appropriate

**Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement as of 11-21-24:**

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**Next Update:** as appropriate

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On the Long-Distance Trainsets:

<p>Continues as an active RFP. Amtrak is continuing to work with carbuilders with a goal of an award next year.</p> <p>On the GP38 – 10 are in production, 5 are on site and 21 of 36 have been conditionally accepted. (Nothing new reported on this procurement on 11-7-24.)</p> <p><b>Next Update: as appropriate</b></p>
<p><b>Status - Document Control Management as of 12-10-24:</b></p> <p><i>Due to the current unknown future of PRIIA, I am working with the Tech Writer to de-Amtrak as many sub-specs as possible that can be completed in time to be approved by the TSC and EB by the end of March.</i></p> <p><i>The Single-Level specification will be completed as soon as the Mechanical WG can finish their last DCR. They are waiting on some information from AAR. This should be completed by March 2025.</i></p> <p><i>The Vehicle Weight WG should have their document approved in the WG by Thursday. It will then be submitted to the Technical Subcommittee.</i></p> <p><b>Next Update: 1-7-24</b></p>
<p><b>VIA Rail Equipment Procurement:</b></p> <p>VIA Rail gave a detailed presentation during the 2024 NGEAC Annual Meeting and will be invited to do the same at the 2025 Meeting.</p> <p><b>Next Update: as appropriate</b></p>
<p><b>Updates: States and Amtrak – Charger Locomotive and Venture Cars Experience:</b></p> <p>Detailed updates were provided during the 2024 Annual Meeting.</p> <p><b>Next Update: As Appropriate</b></p>
<p><b>Filling Vacancies on the Review Panels:</b></p> <p>Caltrans has named Ryan Sharpe as its representative on the Single Level Rail Car Specification Review Panel. The other panels still have vacancies (Caltrans), but the Single Level Spec is the most critical as it will be reconvened once the Technical Subcommittee has completed its review of DCRs for that specification.</p>
<p><b>FRA Research Presentation Series:</b></p> <p>The November presentation was given on 11-7-24 by Anand Prabhakaran, Sharma and Associates on:</p> <p>“Overview of FRA's Glazing Retention Research”</p> <p><b>Next Presentation:</b></p> <p>January 2025 – second meeting of the Technical subcommittee.</p>
<p><b>Next Executive Board Meeting -1-7-24</b></p>

**NGEC Executive Board Meeting**  
**12-10-24**  
**11:30 AM – 12:30 Noon Eastern**  
**Join on your computer, mobile app or room device.**

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**Meeting ID: 222 818 880 704**  
**Passcode: vTzKTH**

**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 11-26-24 meeting | Ray Hessinger |
| 5. Treasurer's Report, FASC updates, Funding | Tim Ziethen   |

Final Balance/Spend Rate for 10-1-23 through 9-30-24

Beginning Balance and Spend rate 10-1-24 through 3-31-25

Status: Internal Amtrak Discussions on future funding of the NGEC – Gov't Affairs/Amtrak Legal:

Potential options/feasibility/legality:

Take Down/set aside percentage of passenger rail equipment procurement grants

- Legal feasibility
- Percentage
- Mechanism

Charging a Fee or subscription:

- Feasibility/legality
- Where would the funds reside/be managed – NGEC not an entity

Outreach to FRA – short term and long-term options discussion

Next Steps?

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 6. Status: Document Control – priority efforts | Tammy Krause  |
| 7. Other/Adjourn                               | Ray Hessinger |

**Next Meeting: 1-7-25**