

**MINUTES OF THE
MARYLAND STEM CELL RESEARCH COMMISSION**
Wednesday, September 20, 2023
(Virtual Meeting)

Members:

Dr. Rachel Brewster, Vice Chair
Margaret Conn Himelfarb
Diane Hoffmann, Chair
Dr. David Mosser
Dr. Barbara Nsiah
Dr. Linda Powers
Avram Reisner
Ira Schwartz
Curt Van Tassell

Staff:

Dr. Ruchika Nijhara, MSCRF
Sabrina Spinner, MSCRF
Dr. Ben Antebi, MSCRF

The Commission meeting was called to order at 11:04 a.m.

I. Statement for Closing the Meeting

A motion was made and seconded that the Commission go into closed session. The motion stated the following:

STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO CLOSE SESSION

General Provisions Article Sec.3-305(b)(5):

A public body may meet in closed session ... to consider the investment of public funds.

General Provisions Article Sec. 3-305(b)(13):

A public body may meet in closed session ... to comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter.

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED:

The discussion will concern the implementation of the Commission's previously adopted criteria for grant funding. The Commission will discuss an application recommended for funding, given the scientific ranking and other relevant factors. The discussion will likely also relate to the characteristics of specific applications and confidential information included therein.

REASON FOR CLOSING:

Paralleling the NIH process for considering funding applications (as contemplated by its enabling legislation), the Commission believes that confidentiality is essential to protect the sensitive information about plans and processes that applicants divulge, to avoid a chilling effect on future submissions, and to enable the most candid Commission discussion of how best to invest its limited resources.

The motion passed unanimously. The Commission went into a closed session at 11:06 a.m.

In the closed session, the Commission discussed the rationale and merit of reconsidering a previous

Manufacturing Assistance application that was submitted in the second cycle of FY23. The applicant's name and affiliated institution were redacted. After a brief discussion, there was a consensus not to reconsider the application for further review and funding and to encourage the applicant to reapply for funding during the next funding cycle.

A motion was made and seconded to reopen the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The Meeting reopened at 11:31 a.m.

I. FY'24 RFA Award Budgets

Dr. Nijhara presented the current RFA funding levels for all programs and shared funding recommendations to implement for the FY'24 funding cycles. Following discussions, the following motions were made:

- **Validation RFAs (FY24, Second Cycle):**
A motion was made and seconded to increase the maximum available award under the Validation Program from \$250,000 to \$350,000 for the purpose of facilitating collaboration between academic institutions and industry. To receive access to the additional \$100,000 in funding, the academic applicant will have to demonstrate and provide proof of collaboration with an industry partner. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Commercialization RFA (FY24, Second Cycle):**
A motion was made and seconded to increase the maximum available from \$400k to \$500k **only if** the Applicant/Company collaborates with an academic institution in Maryland on the project. Without collaboration with an academic institution, the maximum available under the Commercialization Program will remain \$400k. The motion passed (*7 in favor, 2 opposed*)
- **Discovery RFAs (FY24, Second Cycle):**
A motion was made and seconded to increase the maximum available award under the Discovery Program from \$345,000 to \$350,000. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Clinical, Launch, Manufacturing Assistance, & Post-Doctoral Fellowship RFAs (FY24, Second Cycle):**
The Commission reached a consensus not to make any program changes and to retain the existing funding levels for the other 4 funding programs.

Pursuant to the Commission approval, the new RFAs will be posted and accessible online through the MSCRF website.

The meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.