

**MINUTES OF THE
MARYLAND STEM CELL RESEARCH COMMISSION**
Wednesday, September 9, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Members:

Scott Bailey
Rachel Brewster
Margaret Conn Himelfarb
Haig Kazazian
Debra Mathews, Chair
Linda Powers
Avram Reisner
Ira Schwartz
Curt Van Tassell, Vice Chair
Bowen Weisheit

Staff:

Stephen Auvil, TEDCO
Dan Gincel, TEDCO
Amritha Jaishankar, TEDCO
Sabrina Spinner, TEDCO
Troy Stovall, TEDCO

The Commission meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m.

Dr. Dan Gincel welcomed and introduced TEDCO's new CEO, Mr. Troy Stovall.

I. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the July 7, 2020 meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the meeting minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Executive Director Report

Dr. Jaishankar presented the Executive Director's Report, which focused on the following:

A. Operational Updates

At this time, MSCRF/TEDCO is fully operational and staff is working remotely. All in-person meetings will continue to be held virtually or via teleconference.

B. Awardee Updates

We are staying engaged with our current awardees through individual meetings regarding their progress and to communicate important program, operational updates as needed.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on research activities, all active awards with an end date of June 30, 2020 received a 4-month no-cost extension and active awards with a June 30, 2021 end date will receive a 3-month no-cost extension. All active awardees who fall within the extension period were notified. We are continuously monitoring the situation and will modify our reporting requirements and funding timelines in accordance with any new developments.

C. Meetings

The virtual Scientific Peer Review meeting was successfully held in August 2020 for the FY'21 first funding cycle. The peer review committee, comprised of 7 members, evaluated, reviewed and ranked the submitted research proposals and presentations based on guidelines established by the Commission and in a manner that gives due consideration to the scientific, medical, and ethical implications of the work. Funding recommendations will be evaluated by the Commission for final approval during the closed meeting session.

D. Other

Round-Table Discussion with the Comptroller of Maryland

Dr. Debra Mathews, Chair, Dr. Curt Van Tassel, Vice Chair, Dr. Gincel, and Dr. Jaishankar met with Honorable. Peter Franchot, Comptroller of Maryland, and stem cell community leaders for a round-table discussion. Dr. Jaishankar indicated the group collectively provided a comprehensive overview of stem cell research in Maryland, highlighted current advances in stem cell science, and highlighted the Commission's progress towards accelerating therapies and cures for many diseases and conditions including COVID-19 related complications through the Fund.

The Commission and management expressed a great appreciation for the opportunity to meet with Mr. Franchot and staff, and sincerely thanks him for his strong commitment and support for the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund.

Programmatic Strategic Goals- Update

We will continue to work on our programmatic goals by **(a)** updating our files and databases to remain compliant and audit ready; **(b)** continual efforts to establish/foster collaborations to further our mission; **(c)** continuously staying active with the community, and updating our current programs to address critical gaps and to meet market/community needs.

Passing of Former Commission Member (Dr. Noel R. Rose)

Dr. Noel R. Rose, a founding member of the MSCRF Commission and a prominent faculty member and researcher at Johns Hopkins' Bloomberg School of Public Health, died July 30, 2020 from complications of a stroke at the age of 92.

III. MSCRF FY'20 & FY'21 Budget – Update

Due to the COVID-19 economic crisis and the State budget deficit, management is anticipating a potential budget cut for the FY 2021 operating budget. It has not been confirmed if TEDCO programs including the Fund will be impacted by the potential 10% budget cut. With the potential budget cut looming, interest to leverage the Fund's resources stimulated a discussion about the upcoming FY'21 RFAs budget amounts. The Commission discussed multiple options to address the potential cut including a recommendation to reduce the direct costs for 2 of the 6 funding programs (Discovery and Launch) by 10%. Through much consideration, there was a consensus not to change the funding amounts for the Discovery and Launch RFAs. Additionally, the Commission supports the notion to include a general disclaimer statement across all 6 RFAs to indicate approved projects may be funded at or below the proposed amounts due to potential reductions in State appropriations or funds available to the MSCRF. The Commission tabled the discussion and later in an open meeting decided to restore validation to original amount but continue the reduced budget for clinical and commercialization RFAs.

IV. 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 State Government Article Sec.10-503(a)(1)(i):
This subtitle does not apply to ... a public body when it is carrying out ... an administrative function.
State Government Article Sec.10-508(a)(5):
A public body may meet in closed session ... to consider the investment of public funds.

STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE Sec.10-508(a)(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 which applications to recommend for funding, given the scientific rankings and other relevant factors. The discussion might also relate to the characteristics of specific applications.

REASON FOR CLOSING:

Paralleling the NIH process for considering funding applications, the Commission believes that confidentiality is necessary to enable candid discussion of the performance of the aforementioned individual(s).

The motion passed unanimously. The Commission went into a closed session at 1:03 p.m.

In the closed session, the Commission reviewed the scientific peer review ranking of, and key information about, the applications recommended for funding within two of the current categories of grant funding (Clinical, and Commercialization Applications). All applicants' names and affiliated institutions had been redacted. The Commission focused on applications that received competitive, meritorious scientific scores, giving priority to applications that included collaborations, regenerative medicine, translational research, and underfunded areas of research.

<u>RFA Type</u>	<u>Recommended Awards</u>	<u>Total</u>
Clinical	1	\$650,000
Commercialization	2	\$537,680
Total	3	<u>\$1,187,680</u>

The meeting was adjourned at 2:03pm.