

**MINUTES OF THE
MARYLAND STEM CELL RESEARCH COMMISSION**
Monday, September 9, 2024
(6100 Merriweather Drive, Columbia, MD 21044, Columbia, MD)

Members:

Mary Armanios
Scott Bailey, Vice Chair
Rachel Brewster, Chair
Margaret Conn Himelfarb
Diane Hoffmann
David Moser
Linda Powers
Avram Reisner
Ira Schwartz
Curt Van Tassell

Staff:

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

The Commission meeting was called to order at 12:14 p.m.

I. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the June 28, 2024, meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed (7 approved – 1 abstention)

II. 3% COLA Increase for MSCRF Staff

Dr. Nijhara indicated that both the TEDCO Board and MII Board approved a 3% cost of living adjustment (COLA) for FY'25 to their Staff effective July 1, 2024. A motion was made and seconded to apply the same 3% COLA increase for all MSCRF Staff, effective July 1, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

III. 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 which applications to recommend for funding, given the scientific rankings 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 12:31 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 five of the current categories of grant funding (Clinical, Validation, Launch, Commercialization, and Manufacturing Assistance). All applicant names and affiliated institutions were 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. It voted to fund the following awards:

<u>RFA Type</u>	<u>Recommended Awards</u>	<u>Total</u>
Clinical	1	\$360,000
Validation	2	\$599,073
Commercialization	1	\$490,700
Manufacturing Assistance	1	\$1,000,000
Launch	6	\$2,095,875.34
Grand Total	11	\$4,545,648.34

During the closed session, the Commission discussed creating working groups that will focus on several MSCRF administrative matters.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.