

**MINUTES OF THE
MARYLAND STEM CELL RESEARCH COMMISSION**
Monday, September 11, 2023
(TEDCO Office Building, Columbia, MD)

Members:

Dr. Mary Armanios
Dr. Scott Bailey, Vice Chair
Dr. Rachel Brewster, Vice Chair
Margaret Conn Himelfarb
Diane Hoffmann, Chair
Debra Mathews
Dr. Barbara Nsiah
Avram Reisner
Ira Schwartz
Curt Van Tassell

Staff:

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

The Commission meeting was called to order at 12:28 p.m.

I. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the July 10, 2023, meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

II. 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 three of the current categories of grant funding (Validation, Launch, and Commercialization). In addition, the Commission revisited a recommendation to fund three FY'23 applications that were placed on stand-by status during the May 2023 Commission review meeting (1 Discovery and 2 Post-Doctoral Fellowship). 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>
Commercialization	3	\$1,196,000
Validation	2	\$ 479,990
Launch	4	\$1,394,899
	<u>Awarded Reserves</u> (FY'23 - R2)	
Discovery	1	\$ 344,967
Post-Doctoral Fellowship	2	\$ 260,000
Grand Total	12	<u>\$3,675,856</u>

A motion was made and seconded to reopen the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting reopened at 4:15 p.m.

Ruchika Nijhara presented the Executive Director's Report, which focused on the following:

A. Manufacturing Award Update -

Ruchika Nijhara delivered an update regarding the FY23 manufacturing awards, specifically about an award that had been rescinded by a recipient company. Ben Antebi and Ruchika Nijhara presented the Commission with the option of reconsidering the manufacturing application from the FY23 R2 cycle that was not initially granted. Following this discussion, it was unanimously agreed to schedule a follow-up meeting to further deliberate on the possible funding of the application, contingent upon the reevaluation of the application's summary statement.

B. FY'23 MSCRF Award Metrics Ruchika Nijhara presented award metrics for both FY'23 funding cycles, highlighting the number of awards and funding amounts for each funding program, disease targets, and awarded organizations. During the discussion, several Commission members suggested establishing a Metrics/Impact Subcommittee.

Commissioners: Diane Hoffmann (Chair), Debra Mathews, Barbara Nsiah, and Mary Armanios all agreed to serve.

III. Formal Delegation of Authority - Executive Director

The Commission briefly discussed signature authority for MSCRF procurement of goods or services. A motion was made and seconded to give signature authority for all MSCRF procurement of goods or services up to \$25,000 to the MSCRF Executive Director (Ruchika Nijhara). It was agreed that Ruchika would periodically update Commissioners about the procured services. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.