

**Advisory Committee of the  
Regenerative Medicine Research Fund  
Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, July 12, 2016**

A regular meeting of the **Regenerative Medicine Research Fund (the “Fund”)** **Advisory Committee** (the “Committee”) was held on Tuesday, July 12, 2016, at the office of Connecticut Innovations Inc., (CI), 865 Brook Street, Rocky Hill, Connecticut.

**Call to Order:** Noting the presence of a quorum, Mr. Wurzer – Executive Vice President and Chief Investment Officer, and acting Chairperson and Secretary of the meeting – called the Advisory Committee meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Committee members present: David Wurzer (acting Chair); Ronald Hart, Ph.D.; David Goldhamer, Ph.D.; Christopher Heinen, Ph.D.; Diane Krause, Ph.D.; Daniel Devine (by phone); John Hambor, Ph.D.; Paul Pescatello, J.D., Ph.D. (by phone).

Other Attendees: Philip Siuta (CI); Ariel Drew (CI); Whitney Brown, Ph.D. (CI, by phone); Leslie Larson (CI); Alison Bonds (Yale University Stem Cell Center); Marc Lalande (UCHC Stem Cell Institute); Isolde Bates (UCHC Stem Cell Institute); Milton Wallack (CT Stem Cell Coalition).

**Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Wurzer asked the Committee for a motion to move the approval of the May 25, 2016 minutes to a later point on the agenda, once all Committee members had reviewed the draft minutes.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Hart, seconded by Dr. Hambor, the Advisory Committee members voted in favor of tabling the approval of the May 25, 2016 meeting minutes to a later point on the agenda. VOTE: 8-0-0 (In favor: Wurzer, Hart, Goldhamer, Heinen, Krause, Devine, Hambor, Pescatello).

**Funding Schedule and Budget Update**

Mr. Siuta gave the Committee an update on the current funding schedule and bonding availability for RMRF. He stated that the \$10M previously available to fund FY2016 RMRF award requests for proposal was eliminated from RMRF in the 2016 legislative session. However, the Department of Public Health (DPH) had additional funds available from the previous Stem Cell Program that were unused. Mr. Siuta reported that the Office of Policy & Management has approved \$6M in available DPH funds to be forwarded to the RMRF to be awarded by the Committee for the FY2016 award cycle.

Mr. Siuta stated that as of now, the RMRF has an additional two years of RFP calls and award cycles for \$10M each (FY2017 and FY2018). Mr. Wurzer stated that although the next two years of funding is currently available, to date, there has been no commitment from the legislature that those dollars will remain. He stated that the Fund will continue to operate and move forward with the 2017 RFP call; however, he stressed to the Committee the necessity of publicizing the importance of the Fund to legislators in an effort to minimize future funding cuts. Mr. Pescatello reiterated the budget difficulties faced during the 2016 legislative session, and that the Fund was fortunate to receive the funding that it did for the FY2016 award cycle.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Wurzer asked the Committee to consider the minutes from the May 25, 2016 meeting.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Hart, seconded by Dr. Heinen, the Advisory Committee members voted in favor of adapting the minutes from the May 25, 2016 meeting. VOTE: 8-0-0 (In favor: Wurzer, Hart, Goldhamer, Heinen, Krause, Devine, Hambor, Pescatello).

### **Discussion and Motion for Approval of 2016 Funding Awards**

Mr. Wurzer discussed the recusal process, stating that in an effort to make for the most efficient recusal process for conflicted Committee members, the applications would be discussed by university.

Mr. Wurzer reiterated the funding strategy as determined by the Committee at the May 25, 2016 meeting; stating that the Committee will consider awarding the highest scoring applications that scored 40 and above and were within the "highly recommended" category of peer review, as well as consider both Core applications.

A discussion ensued regarding the importance of Core applications, and the amount of resources and support Core facilities offer to university campuses. There was general agreement from the Committee that the FY2017 RFP should be drafted in a way that demonstrates the value of Core facilities, and allows for those facilities to remain in operation post-RMRF funding.

#### *Yale Applications Scoring 40 and Above*

Dr. Krause and Ms. Bonds were recused from the meeting.

A discussion ensued regarding the top scoring Seed and Established Investigator applications from Yale University. Concern was expressed by the Committee members regarding the overlap in personnel between each application, and the realistic time

commitments that would be allotted for each project's completion. It was also stated that each of the PI's have received RMRF/Stem Cell funding in the past.

The Committee brainstormed possible ways to cut the funding from \$6.7M to \$6M, in order to fall within the available \$6M of awards. Although the Committee regarded the Seed application as excellent research, concerns remain over time that could be dedicated for execution of the project as well as the possibility of future funding for the investigator, given the current and future available funding.

It was proposed to eliminate the Seed proposal, 16-RMA-YALE-09, as well as universally decrease the awarded dollar amounts of the Established Investigator applications that scored 40 and above.

Dr. Krause and Ms. Bonds joined the meeting; Mr. Pescatello left the meeting; Dr. Heinen, Dr. Goldhamer, Dr. Lalande and Ms. Bates were recused from the meeting.

*University of Connecticut & University of Connecticut Health Center Applications Scoring 40 and Above*

As the Committee had agreed to award the UCHC Core proposal at the May 25, 2016 meeting, Mr. Wurzer asked the Committee members to consider the remaining three applications from UConn/UCHC that scored 40 and above. A discussion ensued. As no concerns were expressed with any specific application, the conflicted Committee members rejoined the meeting.

Dr. Heinen, Dr. Goldhamer, Dr. Lalande and Ms. Bates joined the meeting.

Per the objectives of the 2016 RFP call, Mr. Wurzer also asked the Committee to consider the highest scoring company application.

Mr. Wurzer was recused from the meeting.

The Committee members discussed application 16-RMC-AXE-01. It was noted that the application scored a 39, right below the "highly recommended" cut-off. A discussion ensued regarding the proposed science. Strong clinical concerns were expressed, as well as concerns regarding the low success rate of the science. Concerns were also expressed regarding the amount of dollars that would be spent within Connecticut. There was general consensus that while the application is interesting and the team is strong, the Committee would be required to make a dramatic cut to the amount award for the proposed group project in order to stay within the \$6M of funding available. As a result of potentially cutting the amount requested, the proposed project would be significantly affected. For the above reasons, along with the majority of the dollars potentially spent out-of-state, the Committee agreed the company would not receive funding for its application.

Mr. Wurzer joined the meeting.

*Funding Strategy for 2016 Awards*

The Committee members discussed possible funding strategies to move forward with for the 2016 awards. It was proposed to make a universal cut of all Established Investigator applications scoring a 40 and above, rather than eliminating specific applications. Mr. Devine questioned the validity of making universal funding cuts that could affect the deliverable of a project. He instead suggested cutting the lowest scoring Seed applications given the early-stage nature of those applications and instead awarding the Established Investigator applications in full, whose projects have more foundation and are better aligned with the legislator's objectives.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Hart, seconded by Dr. Krause, the Committee members voted in favor of moving the Public Comment agenda item up in the meeting. VOTE: 7-0-0 (In favor: Wurzer, Hart, Goldhamer, Heinen, Krause, Devine, Hambor).

Mr. Wallack stated that Seed grants have been rewarding, and have brought new investigators to the Fund, and to the state of Connecticut. He stated that awarding an application for less than what was originally requested has never been a problem to investigators, or garnered negative feedback. Other members of the public thanked the Committee for their work and dedication to the Fund.

Further discussion ensued.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Hambor, seconded by Dr. Heinen, the Advisory Committee members voted in favor of universally reducing each of the Established Investigator Applications scoring 40 and above by \$74,500. VOTE 7-0-0 (In favor: Wurzer, Hart, Goldhamer, Heinen, Krause, Hambor, Devine).

Upon a motion made by Dr. Hambor, seconded by Dr. Hart, the Advisory Committee members voted in favor of not awarding application 16-RMA-YALE-09, Wang. VOTE 6-1-0. (In favor: Wurzer, Hart, Goldhamer, Heinen, Devine, Hambor; Abstained: Krause).

*List of 2016 RMRF Applications Awarded:*

- 16-RMB-YALE-07, Ivanova
- 16-RMD-YALE-01, Lin
- 16-RMA-YALE-19, Lu
- 16-RMA-YALE-26, Strazzabocco
- 16-RMA-UCONN-02, Lai
- 16-RMB-YALE-04, Park
- 16-RMA-YALE-10, Bahal
- 16-RMA-YALE-13, van Wolfswinkel
- 16-RMA-YALE-28, Waxman
- 16-RMB-UCHC-10, Kalajzic

- 16-RMB-UCONN-04, Nelson
- 16-RMB-YALE-03, Halene
- 16-RMD-UCHC-01, Lalande

**Advocacy Sub-Committee Discussion**

Mr. Wurzer reviewed the list of Committee members and members of the public who have volunteered to serve on the Ad Hoc Advocacy Sub-Committee in order to publicize to CT legislators the accomplishments and importance of RMRF. Dr. Lalande, Ms. Bates, and Ms. Bonds also volunteered to serve on the Committee. Mr. Wurzer stated that the RMRF team will organize a call with the volunteers in order to discuss next steps.

**Other Business**

Mr. Wurzer stated that Kevin Rakin has resigned from the RMRF Advisory Committee, effective July 5, 2016.

**Adjournment**

Upon a motion made by Dr. Heinen, seconded by Dr. Goldhamer, the Advisory Committee members voted in favor of adjourning the meeting at 12:00 p.m. VOTE 7-0-0. (In favor: Wurzer, Hart, Goldhamer, Heinen, Devine, Hambor, Krause).

Respectfully Submitted,



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David M. Wurzer, Executive Vice President and Chief Investment Officer  
Connecticut Innovations, Inc.  
Acting Chair