Massachusetts
LIFE SCIENCES CENTER

Minutes of the MLSC Board of Directors Meeting
March 25, 2026

DATE: March 11, 2026
TIME: 2:00 p.m. EST
PLACE: The Engine, Cambridge, MA

Members Present: Eric Paley, Secretary of Economic Development
Julie Chen, Ph.D, Designee for UMass President Marty Meehan
Bran Shim, Designee, Secretary for Administration and Finance
Chris Coburn
Thea James
Brian Johnson
Valerie Fleishman

Members Connected Dana Mendenhall
Pam Randhawa

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order and Dr. Kirk Taylor, CEO and President of the MLSC welcomed the committee members. Attendance was taken by roll call as recorded above.

Approval of Meeting Minutes
Allyson McLaughlin Huntington, General Counsel and Board Secretary, presented the February 25, 2026 meeting minutes for approval. One clerical error was identified and the minutes as revised were presented for approval. Upon motion duly made and seconded a roll call of Committee members was taken and the Motion to approve the minutes carried.

Co-Chair Updates
Secretary Paley, Executive Office of Economic Development, gave a brief update regarding the meeting with the ARPA-H coalition which included a convening with representatives from ARPA-H, the Administration, as well as members of the MLSC and the MLSC Board of Directors among others. The members of the Board then discussed outcomes and next steps for follow up to continue the momentum. The Secretary also gave an update on the budgets and reported that there were no questions regarding the MLSC budget item. Secretary Paley opened the floor to those Board members who attended the convening to discuss the event and next steps from the MA perspective.

Bran Shim, designee for the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, did not have any updates since the February meeting.

CEO Update
Kirk Taylor, MD, provided remarks indicating that the sub-sector of robotics may be an important focus as we look to the future. The members of the Board briefly discussed the robotics industry in MA, especially in medtech, noting there is a large presence in MA. Dr. Taylor then discussed the status of the DRIVE initiative. Funding for the initiative changed, now sourced from the Rainy-Day Fund and EOAF has oversight of those funds.

2035 Fund Awards
Carla Reimold, PhD, EVP Scientific Innovation and Strategic Investments, provided a recap of the 2035 Fund, allocations for the programs in the tracks of the Fund, and introduced the four program tracks before the Board for approval. The Board discussed the current apogee of demand for the MLSC capital programs, noting the program team's report on how several programs are highly oversubscribed. The conversation centered on distinguishing between the "market demand" and demonstrable need, with an emphasis on periodically reassessing the underlying purpose and rationale why the program exists, to ensure continued alignment with the MLSC mission and strategic priorities.

FY26 Research Infrastructure

Audrey Byrne, PhD, Program Manager, provided an overview of the FY26 Research Infrastructure program which seeks to invest in innovative infrastructure across the Commonwealth with a high demand from both academic and industry scientists. The program includes awards between $1.5 - $5M for non-profit core facilities. Funded assets must be made publicly available through R.E.D. (Research Equipment Database). Key Metrics include tracking utilization of the equipment. Dr. Byrne reviewed how the $55 million investment(s) from MLSC led to $70 million in matched funds and $160 million in additional external funding. For this round, there were 39 applications. The Board had the opportunity to ask questions about the program, including a robust discussion on the impact of the program and the metrics captured, and the extent of users accessing the equipment. Dr. Byrne presented the six awardees proposed for funding and the Board had the opportunity to pose questions.

The Board discussed the utilization metrics for this program, and recognized that research institutions do not traditionally open the equipment to outside users, therefore the MLSC program is useful to supporting shared access to the core facilities and increase utilization. The Board discussed how the core facilities are required to leverage the Commonwealth investment (infrastructure). Public access to the equipment is strongly marketed to make sure the ecosystem is aware of its availability.

Upon motion duly made and carried, the Board voted to approve funding for the proposed awardees as presented.

FY26 Research Equipment

Meghan Davis, Program Manager, presented the pilot FY26 Research Equipment program and the awards for this first round of the program. The goal of the program is to support the purchase of cutting-edge research equipment for Massachusetts-based nonprofit institutions that will benefit the broader life sciences ecosystem. The design of the program includes the award of grants up to $500k per award. An overview of the metrics that will be tracked, FY26 application pool, external reviewers and recommended awardees were discussed.

The Board discussed the issue of the program(s) being oversubscribed and whether that should be evaluated due to the time invested in submitting applications and the time to review, as well as the number of applications that are rejected. The Board had the opportunity to ask questions about the program and awardees.

Upon motion duly made and carried, the Board voted to approve funding for the proposed awardees as presented.

FY26 Frontiers Program

Meghan Davis, Program Manager, presented the pilot FY26 Frontiers Fund. The goal of the program is to support early-stage, high-risk translational research in impactful, yet difficult to translate, life sciences areas. Focus areas include antimicrobial resistance, health equity-driven solutions, medical devices, mental health and neuropsychiatric disorders, microbiome science and therapeutics, non-opioid pain therapeutics, orphan diseases. The program is designed into three phases, and the Board reviewed the structure and concept of each phase and the key metrics to be measured include unique insights from challenging fields and translational success.

The Board had the opportunity to ask additional questions about the program and awardees. The philosophy of the phases was discussed.

Upon motion duly made and carried, the Board voted to approve funding for the proposed awardees as presented.

FY26 Women's Health Initiative

Dr. Tiffany Walther, PhD, Program Manager, presented the FY26 Women's Health Initiative and the goal of the program to advance scientific understanding and improve clinical care for conditions that uniquely or disproportionately affect women through a rotating focus on specific disease areas starting with pregnancy-induced hypertension and perimenopause/menopause. The program funds projects that are approximately two years in length and includes both capital funds and Breakthrough funds, with awardees joining one of the four pillar-based research teams within their disease focus area. The interdisciplinary teams will coordinate to foster innovation through collaboration. The pillars of the program design include AI and data science, disease biology, targeted R&D, and clinical adoption. The program's impact measurement includes a collaborative team model to promote synergy and maximize scientific returns, in addition to progress reporting. Sponsorships and outreach overviews was discussed. This program received 54 applications that were rigorously reviewed by a panel of expert independent reviewers. Dr. Walther presented the 14 proposed awardees.

The Board had the opportunity to ask questions about the program and awardees.

Upon motion duly made and carried, the Board voted to approve funding for the proposed awardees as presented.

Strategy Process Update

Elizabeth Graham, Chief Operating Officer, provided an update on the MLSC leadership team strategy “sprint” efforts and timeline. The Board reviewed where MLSC dollars are going, both program-based funding and tax-incentive credits. Board made a request to also gather information of “categories of what projects are funded”. MLSC is streamlining how it operates in tandem with strategic planning to make sure processes are simplified for efficiency. Board had the opportunity to provide feedback on the hypotheses, whether they need to be refined or if there are other areas that need to be examined. A robust discussion of the direction of the strategy planning followed.

There being no further business, the Board adjourned.

Materials Used During Meeting:

Agenda
Minutes of the February 25, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting
2035 Fund Award(s) Presentation
CEO Update Presentation
Strategy Process Presentation