

# NEW JERSEY COMMISSION ON SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

January 30, 2026

*This meeting was held via Microsoft Teams.*

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Members of the Commission present via Microsoft Teams: Debbie Hart, BioNJ, Chair; Ram Akella for Evan Weiss, CEO of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority; Stefani Thachik for Acting Secretary Margo Chaly, OSHE; Dr. Jorden Schiff for Kevin Dehmer, Commissioner, DOE; and Public Members Adam Sternbach.

Members of the Commission absent: David Pascrell, Gibbons, Vice Chair; Dr. Alain Kornhauser, Princeton University; Cuneyt Erdogan, Clarus Engineering; and Non-Voting Legislative Members: Senator Paul Sarlo, and Assemblyman Christopher DePhillips; and Non-Voting University Member; Dr. William F. Tate, IV, President, Rutgers University.

Also present: Non-Voting Legislative Members: Senator Robert Singer, and Dana Walter for Assemblyman Christopher Tully; and Vince Smeraglia, Rutgers University, Christopher L. Hughes, Chief of Staff, Assemblyman DePhillips office; Judith Sheft, Executive Director, CSIT; Frances Keel, Program Officer, CSIT; Jiaqi Liu, Program Specialist, CSIT; Christine Machnowsky, Deputy Attorney General; Samuel Kovach-Orr, GAU; EDA Staff: Danielle Esser, Director; Hector Serrano, Sr. Project Officer; and Fabiola Saturne, Project Officer.

Per the Chair's request, Ms. Esser read the Open Public Meetings announcement and performed the roll call of the Commission.

Prior to commencing the meeting, Chair Hart asked Mr. Serrano to read aloud a statement regarding the process for public comment at the board meeting for any members of the public on the call. No members of the public presented themselves at this time.

## PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The first item was the approval of the October 31, 2025, meeting minutes.

**MOTION TO APPROVE:** Mr. Akella      **SECOND:** Ms. Thachik      **AYES: 5**

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY:** The next item was the presentation of the Chair's Report to the Commission.

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY:** The next item was the presentation of the Executive Director's Report to the Commission.

Ms. Sheft presented the next item before the Board.

**ITEM:** Sixth Amendment to the MOU between CSIT and NJEDA

**REQUEST:** Approval of a Sixth Amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding between the New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority

**MOTION TO APPROVE:** Mr. Sternbach                      **SECOND:** Dr. Schiff    **AYES: 4**

**RESOLUTION ATTACHED AND MARKED EXHIBIT: 1**

*Mr. Akella abstained due to a potential conflict of interest.*

Ms. Keel presented the next item before the Board.

**ITEM:** NJ Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology Provision of \$50K to Kean University to Support Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) Grant Writing Activities

**REQUEST:** Approval of \$50,000 payment to Kean University to support a Phase 0 SBIR/STTR grant writing support program, and approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between CSIT and Kean University.

**MOTION TO APPROVE:** Mr. Akella                      **SECOND:** Mr. Sternbach                      **AYES: 5**

**RESOLUTION ATTACHED AND MARKED EXHIBIT: 2**

Ms. Liu presented the next item before the Board.

**ITEM:** Increase in Funding for Clean Tech Research and Development (R&D) Voucher Pilot Program, Round 3

**REQUEST:** Approval of an additional \$520,000 in funding for the Clean Tech Research and Development (R&D) Voucher Pilot Program, Round 3.

**MOTION TO APPROVE:** Mr. Akella                      **SECOND:** Ms. Thachik                      **AYES: 5**

**RESOLUTION ATTACHED AND MARKED EXHIBIT: 3**

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY:** The next item was the Delegated Authority Update on R&D Voucher & SBIR/STTR Direct Financial Assistance Programs.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

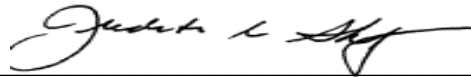
There being no further business, on a motion by Mr. Schiff and seconded by Mr. Sternbach, the meeting was adjourned at 10:52 AM.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The next meeting date for the Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology is scheduled For Friday, May 1, 2026 at 10:00 AM, in person and virtually.

**CERTIFICATION:**

The foregoing and attachments represent a true and complete summary of the actions taken by the Commission on Science, Innovation, and Technology at its Meeting on January 30, 2026.



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Judith Sheft, Executive Director  
New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology