

4A - 230828

From: WRowan <[REDACTED]>

Date: Monday, August 28, 2023 at 6:35 PM

To: Adrian Haro <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER]

Subject: Follow up to meeting

Adrian,

Following an unproductive meeting this afternoon, I want to express disappointment at what seems like your lack of any sense of responsibility for the potentially imminent shut down of this project. There is clearly more you could be doing. Your statements that you "feel at peace" about the situation, I am just a vendor and have to sort out the issues, and your lack of proactivity is further contributing to the likelihood this ambitious program will fail just as it gets so close to success.

The situation as seen from this end currently is this:

1. As I have told you over the last several weeks, [REDACTED - LAUNCH PARTNER] understood from your last phone call with him that he should not expect any further funding from TWL after the August disbursement. We are dealing with the aftermath of that situation at this end and may soon lose [REDACTED] which will effectively end a project currently with hundreds of active workers. This may not concern you, but it will be a disastrous setback for attempts to empower lower wage non-standard workers through the public workforce system.
2. You have not been able to provide any assurance regarding September's scheduled disbursement to MM4A. We are about to – again – start going through our tripwires for managed closedown.

Some of the assertions on which you appear to be basing your position are easily disproved. You stated last week and this week that "We have put in well over a million dollars to this Design Sprint". You have pledged \$[REDACTED] of which TWL still owe us \$[REDACTED] (the backlog you have committed on multiple occasions will be paid) and around \$[REDACTED] to [REDACTED]. So, you have actually put in about \$[REDACTED].

And your claim that you have confirmed payments sometimes in the second week of the month in which those payments were due is shaky. I can assemble several emails showing you undertook to come back to us to confirm funding by a certain date but did not. When I chased you there was a confirmation, and some of those slipped dangerously down the month. But that situation hardly reflects creditably on TWL's organization.

To remind you about what I would suggest from a mature organization with a sense of responsibility for its errors; in this uncertainty you could:

Clarify: I can only repeat it again, if you did not intend [REDACTED] to believe that forward funding was likely to terminate after the August disbursement, please email to tell him that. If you do not, we have to plan on the basis that is what you said, however much you protest it isn't, or that I have no business trying to resolve the situation for people for whom I feel responsible.

Plan ahead: I have – once again – suggested the two pots of \$[REDACTED] TWL had earmarked for [REDACTED] and Chicago's launch be reassigned to Long Beach, [REDACTED] does not seem to need the funds, Chicago is a far weaker project than Long Beach by any standard. You are now saying you will discuss this with [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER] when he is back from leave next week. Why wasn't it explored before this? You have known about the dangers of losing Long Beach for the last few weeks. What other possibilities for a solution are there that I may not see or may not be communicating in ways you pick up?

Plan for scenarios: If you can't clarify the situation regarding September disbursements, then to be responsible, we should plan for the most likely scenarios. We may not need to execute those plans, but not having them invites further chaos. The two obvious scenarios are:

1. **Worst case:** There is no notification of further funds for TWL in September. Do we need to be exploring a brutal paring back of everyone's costs to understand how longer could eke out what's available. Your suggestion I just email over some cuts we could make at this end (while massively increasing every risk) is ridiculous. TWL's establishment costs need to come under scrutiny in ways I honestly don't think you are seeing.
2. **Best-case:** Funds do come in: What is our timeline/run rate/deliverables, etc. then? How do we use that happy circumstance to get out of the disarray for at least a few months of solid operations?

Both plans require non-superficial transparency and admissions of vulnerability by each side.

Introductions: I have – again – suggested TWL might introduce us to funders; you have a full time fundraiser and brand we can't match. You said to email a list of the funders I want to meet. This is just time consuming at my end and invites negative response ("can't help, don't know them"). I don't know who you are engaged with. Why aren't you thinking about who in your network, or in [REDACTED]'s networks – for example – with whom you could initiate some dialogue?

I think today has clarified a key difference in our understanding of this moment. Let's identify it so we can agree to disagree:

I believe TWL has responsibility for our financial uncertainty. If you tell a grantee to "Trust me/us on the funding" repeatedly and they do so, you can then say it is their problem alone, but it reveals what many would regard as a lack of organizational integrity. If the grantee then realized dependency was probably a mistake and tried to get going with independent fundraising, while blocked by the TWL CEO's insistence that fundraising can't be supported because "your messaging is

crap”, forcing months of waiting while a TWL consultant fails to deliver anything usable, it further suggests leadership lacking a moral core.

I obviously don’t know how much TWL has squandered on the expensive lawyers you refer to as “My legal team” since March. I do have enough experience to know the legal threat they were hired (initially at least) to protect you against is non-existent. (As I made clear in the complaint, I don’t have standing to sue TWL for harassment because I am working unpaid – it’s what some of us do in tough times. My *organization* is financially dependent on TWL, as a person I am not.) However, TWL faces enormous *reputational* risk, which your lawyers exacerbate in ways I am happy to spell out.

You choosing to overlook all this, and your indifference to details like the shared rationale for fundraising with at least a show of collaboration, does not mitigate the impacts. The same is true of dysfunctional behavior at TWL, unchecked despite repeated attempts at warnings, through the first 12 months of this Design Sprint. I have no desire to go over this unedifying ground; but nor are we in a position to quietly absorb all the consequences so TWL can carry on untroubled.

I don’t now where this leaves us. Absent any of your directors’ willingness to have a conversation, I have to assume you have their backing and speak for the whole of TWL with these sentiments. It is an unpleasant surprise. I support the aims of TWL 100%, but its prioritization of its own organizational objectives and view of itself, rather than the low paid workers we are serving, is chilling.

Wingham