

September 26, 2019

Julia Howard,  
Chair  
Rescue Outreach Mission of Central Florida, Inc.

Ms. Howard,

It is with much sadness, that I must resign as the Executive Director of the Rescue Outreach Mission. This has been one of the most difficult decisions that I have had to make. Difficult, because I truly enjoy working at the Mission and serving the community. However, the Board's governance of the Agency impacts the role of Executive Director and therefore requires a trusting, positive and collaborative working relationship. Over the past year, the actions of the Board of Director's at the Mission have been vexing. There have been many issues that the Mission has faced. But in the past 90 days I have been tested beyond measure, culminating on Friday September 21, when I received an email that signified the lack of sensitivity, trust and confidence in me as the Executive Director.

The following are examples of the issues that are contributors to my decision:

1. Within the first 90 days of my employment, we were unable to make payroll (the pay period before Christmas). I had met Mr. Good the week prior and had to return to this supporter to request a significant financial contribution, with no support from the Board.
2. In the months of February and March, the Board was provided with cash flow projections which identified the shortfalls in the budget. It is crucial for the Board to understand that grants cannot be the sole funder of the organization, a diversified funding stream to include strong fundraising is crucial to organizational fiscal viability.
3. In May, when we missed payroll, there was a lack of Board visibility in addressing the issues with staff, media and community.
4. In July, during the third payroll crisis, the Board of Directors did two things that I feel constituted a lack of trust and confidence in me as the Executive Director;
  - a. invited a former Board Member to the meeting to ask me questions about the finances with no notice to me so that I could be prepared.
  - b. decided in the midst of trying to determine how to proceed with the County, to have a meeting without me, and not fully communicate the outcome of the meeting to me.
5. Despite my request for a Board Retreat in August (request made in May), I specifically identified in May the reason why a retreat was needed for the organization, the retreat never occurred.
6. On September 9, 2019 as a team we reviewed the County's proposal, I sent out the list of questions, suggestions and edits requested by the Board regarding the proposed Emergency Funding Agreement with the County and cc'd the Board. The next day, September 10, 2019, was the BOC budget meeting. I sent out an email on the day of the meeting inviting every ROM Board Member to attend the BOC budget meeting. No one responded. However, at the subsequent Board Meeting, (September 12, 2019) I was made to feel as though I entered into an agreement with the County that the Board did not support. To the point that I felt the need to

say. "If this is something that you do not want, I will state to the County that I entered into the agreement and the Board did not support".

7. On Thursday September 12, 2019 prior to the Board Meeting I sent out an email clearly articulating that we were again short of payroll 9/13/2019 and I had to remove myself and 1 other staff person's salary to make payroll. Additionally, I noted that I would have to donate to the organization to cover the gap. There was one Board Member who reached out to me and said, "I will cover it". \* I still have not been paid ~~from~~ for the payroll of 9/13/19. What's more disheartening is I have not received any communication from the Board regarding my missed payroll.
8. On Friday September 21, 2019 I received an email from the Board stating the following: "The board is preparing for the October 10, 2019 meeting. We'd like for this to be a "Director's only" meeting..." I clarified with the Board whether I was excluded from this meeting. The response was "*This meeting will only be for the Board. You are not required to attend. We need to go over action items for our group.*" I may have entered the organization without full knowledge of the inner workings of ROM, however I refuse to go into year two without being a full partner with the Board.

I held leadership positions in not for profit organizations for the majority of my professional career and have either directly reported to or have been a part of a management team where my direct supervisor reported to a board of directors. What I understand and know is that the relationship between the Executive Director and Board of Directors must be built on trust, open communication and shared mutual goals for the organization being represented to be successful. These characteristics are not reflective of my experience with ROM and therefore, I respectfully submit my resignation effective November 8, 2019.

I wish ROM success in your future endeavor.

Cordially,

Rosalyn A Thomas LCSW PhD