Dear Coordinating Committee Members,

This letter is designed to prepare you for a difficult conversation we must have on

Tuesday, August 1 at 4 ET/3 CT/2 MT/ 1 PT. As usual, we will use Zoom:

Video call: <https://zoom.us/j/9026104845>

Telephone: +1 646 558 8656 (US Toll) or +1 408 638 0968 (US Toll)

Meeting ID: 902 610 4845

I’ve spent the last six months zooming around the United States, attempting to find a way to grow and strengthen the Media Consortium. I regret that I have been unsuccessful.

As I informed you in July, the major journalism funders have chosen to put their money elsewhere. I can review each foundation with you, but the bottom line is that we aren’t going to see their money in 2017 or 2018.

Since July, I have researched and held in-depth conversations with potential partners who could serve as umbrella organizations, flying to DC this week to have a face to face with Free Press. I can share details on our call, but the bottom line is that I haven’t been able to locate partners that have the capacity or the right mission to be a good home for us.

We currently have 3 months of cash in our bank, at our current spend rate. We are due another $9,000 from the New Economy Project, and could see a final grant from MDF. But even if the “sexual assault” grant comes in, I don’t anticipate that we will really have enough to take us through 2018.

WE must consider our duty to our members at this point. I have talked with many of them, and here is the key information I’ve gleaned:

1. Media Consortium members, with just a few exceptions, very much want TMC to be alive.
2. The main member benefit is the conference; the second benefit is the listserv.
3. About half of TMC members would not be able to find a home in any other association.

Here is what I propose:

1. Return TMC to being a mostly volunteer-run organization. Use the listserv, website and member database to keep in touch. The total cost for that infrastructure is $7500/year, easily paid by member dues.
2. Consider keeping member dues at current levels and hire a 10hr/wk membership coordinator for $10K/year ($20/hr)
3. Move the fiscal sponsorship from Mother Jones, which is ready to move on, over to Allied Media Projects in Detroit (for a fee to be negotiated). As a sponsored project of AMP, TMC would be able to hold a “network” day at the Allied Media Conference in Detroit every year. Members could self-organize that.

In short, for a budget of $25,000 or so, TMC members could stay in touch and have an annual meeting. That way, if a funder suddenly sees the light, the organization can once again ramp up. And in the meantime, members can find and get support in a self-sustaining way.

I’d like to discuss this option with you on the call and see if we can come to consensus. If you have other ideas please raise them. For example, if you think a different executive director could potentially get funding and lift the organization, please feel free to say so. I won’t be offended. I’m also happy to get off the call if you want to have that conversation.

I need to give our members a heads up, one way or the other, so if for some reason you can’t make the call, please reply to this email and let others know what you are thinking. I would like a group vote on whatever plan we agree upon.

Jo Ellen

p.s. Manolia and I have already talked at length, and we both are going to start job-hunting. One reason to make a decision now is to give staff time and resources to transition. jgk