

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CIVIL DIVISION**

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA : Case Number: 2024 CAB 4751
v. : Judge: Shana Frost Matini
YAZAM INC. d/b/a EMPOWER : Show Cause Hearing: October 14, 2025

ORDER

This matter was before the Court on September 30, 2025 for a show cause hearing for Defendant Yazam Inc. d/b/a Empower (“Empower”) and Empower’s Chief Executive Officer, Joshua Sear, to show cause why additional coercive sanctions should be imposed upon them for their continued contumacious conduct.¹

At that hearing, Mr. Sear represented that he had directed the appropriate engineers at Empower to begin the process of updating Empower’s application so that the service could no longer operate in the District of Columbia. Mr. Sear estimated that the required changes needed to obtain compliance with the November 26, 2024 Order could be achieved by—at the latest—Friday, October 10, 2025.

¹ By way of background, on November 26, 2024, the Court granted the District’s Motion for Judgment on the Pleadings, and ordered that Empower “shall immediately cease operations as a digital dispatch service and private sedan business, to include a prohibition on using the Empower platform to provide any rides which originate or terminate in the District, until such a time as Defendant has registered as a Private Vehicle-For-Hire Company under D.C. Code § 50-301.29a(12) and 31 DCMR §§ 1605.1, 1902.1, as required by the May 22, 2024, Order issued by the Office of Administrative Hearings affirming the cease and desist order issued to Defendant by the District Department of For-Hire Vehicles.” *See* Order (Nov. 26, 2024). On February 3, 2025, following a show cause hearing where “Empower expressly acknowledged its non-compliance with the Court’s Order,” the Court issued a Conditional Order of Contempt, requiring Empower to pay a \$25,000 fine per day until Empower purged the contempt by coming into compliance with the November 26, 2024 Order. *See* Order (Feb. 3, 2025). When Empower failed to purge the contempt, after additional show cause/evidentiary hearings, Mr. Sear was also held in contempt, and a daily fine of \$5,000.00 was assessed against him until the contempt was purged. *See* Order (Mar. 19, 2025). When Empower and its CEO continued to fail to comply with the November 26, 2024 Order, Plaintiff sought further contempt sanctions. After hearings on April 30, 2025, May 14, 2025, June 12, 2025, July 23, 2025, and August 13, 2025, the Court indicated that it was constrained to consider additional coercive sanctions to address the continued failure to comply, including the potential incarceration of Mr. Sear, who had represented that he was the only individual with authority to authorize Empower to cease its operations in the District of Columbia. All prior orders of the Court, and statements made on the record in the numerous prior hearings, are incorporated herein by reference.

Because Empower is licensed to operate in several other jurisdictions, including Maryland and Virginia, the Court accepted Mr. Sear's representations that reasonable efforts were underway to expeditiously bring Empower into compliance with the November 26, 2024 Order while still permitting Empower to operate in other jurisdictions where it was legally permitted to do so. The Court therefore ordered that Empower provide reasonably detailed status updates as to the progress of its efforts to achieve compliance with the November 24, 2024 Order by close of business on October 3, 2025, October 8, 2025, and October 10, 2025, and set a further status hearing.

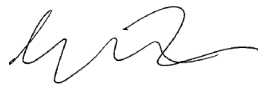
Therefore, for the reasons stated above and at the September 30, 2025 hearing, it is this 1st day of October 2025:

ORDERED that the February 3, 2025 and March 19, 2025 Order imposing daily fines for the ongoing contempt of Empower and Joshua Sear are **STAYED** until further Order of the Court; and it is further

ORDERED that the Motion for Relief from Judgment and for Indicative Ruling is **DENIED WITHOUT PREJUDICE**; and it is further

ORDERED that the parties shall appear in person for a show cause hearing on October 14, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in Courtroom 130. The hearing may be vacated upon the filing of a joint praecipe stating that the contempt of the November 26, 2024 Order has been fully purged.

SO ORDERED.



Judge Shana Frost Matini
Superior Court of the District of Columbia

Copies electronically served upon counsel of record