

February 13, 1978

Acting Area Director
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Minneapolis Area Office
831 Second Avenue, South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

Dear Sir,

At the 2/6/78 meeting of the Oneida Business Committee, the question of the selection of the Field Representative was discussed. Since I had been notified by Mr. Manydeeds and our Tribal Chairman that I was considered eligible for the position last September (both of these were phone conversations), I was surprised to hear that the position had been reopened and a person had been selected without any further notification to me. I was even more surprised that the position of BIA Community Development Specialist had also been reopened and that the job qualifications had been lowered without even considering me for the position. If you will remember, I applied for both positions, and in the first round of applicants was told by Mr. Manydeeds and the Tribal Chairman that I was the only qualified applicant for either position.

My reaction to the chain of events that followed can only be described as one of shocked amazement! When Purcell Powless, Tribal chairman, was asked what his position was in the selection of the Field Rep, he indicated that Mr. Manydeeds had called him about me, and Purcell had stated that he would not support me for anything. The reason he gave to me, and to all those present at the Business Committee meeting on 2/6/78, was that he knew I was behind the tribal petition to oust the Business Committee officers and in his mind this constituted undermining Tribal government.

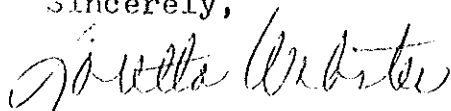
Since the term "undermining Tribal government" has been used on several occasions by a number of our elected tribal leadership, I would like to point out that the Constitution and By-laws of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin states in Article III, Section 3. "The General Tribal Council may at its discretion remove any official on the Business Committee by a two-thirds majority vote at any regular or special meeting of the Tribal Council." If I had signed the above mentioned petition, or if I had gotten signatures for it, I would have been doing nothing more than carrying out my responsibility as an Oneida Tribal member, and upholding a constitutional process our forefathers set up for us to help assure that all Oneida people can participate in tribal self-government. To say I was "undermining Tribal government" in this context seems to serve only Purcell Powless' purposes, and is intimidating to many tribal members who are not sure how to get involved in their tribal government. Whether by ignorance or by design, such intimidation could be construed to be "undermining," or at least blocking, the efficient running of the Oneida Tribal government.

On occasion when Mr. Powless has uttered similar types of allegations toward other tribal members it has seemed to me like a childish case of vindictiveness which I tried not to take too seriously. On this occasion, I am forced to take it seriously since it appears that he has convinced Mr. Manydeeds and a number of others in the BIA that I am somewhat of a dishonorable person. I consider his remarks about me to be slanderous. Obviously you have made decisions concerning my ability to fulfill the responsibilities of the Field Rep or Community Development Specialist positions based on Mr. Powless' assertions to Mr. Manydeeds. Yet, it is interesting that I am forced to defend myself in a situation that holds more serious concerns toward Purcy than toward myself. The discussion at the Business Committee meeting and my subsequent research of tribal documents indicates that Purcell Powless had no authority to withhold tribal support of me for the Field Rep position, or any position, without going through the Business Committee which he did not do. In Article I of the By-laws of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin it states that the chairman shall "exercise any authority delegated to him by the Council." Nowhere in the Tribal Constitution, the Oneida Management System or the minutes of the Business Committee does it show that Purcell was delegated the authority to act on a matter such as this without Business Committee approval. You yourself know this to be true.

I have not been able to get the minutes from the 2/6/78 meeting, but in paraphrasing its final action, the Business Committee unanimously supported a motion to request the BIA to consider all applicants for the position of Field Rep. Since I am one of these applicants, and there is a possibility this position will again be open, I am requesting a written response to this letter clarifying your position in this whole matter and how it will proceed in the future. In addition, I am requesting that you provide me with the Civil Service regulations concerning the hiring of people into positions such as the Field Rep, and specifically, I would like you to provide me with my rights under Indian preference.

Please consider this letter an appeal of all BIA decisions connected with this matter. I am sure that you can understand that I feel I have been hurt both personally and professionally by these incidents.

Sincerely,



Loretta Webster
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cc: Oneida Business Committee members
Elmer Nietschke
BIA Affirmative Action Officer
CIVIL Service Commission
Mr. Edmund Manydeeds