



Waganakising Odawak

Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians

Regina Gasco, Tribal Chairperson

7500 Odawa Circle, Harbor Springs, Michigan 49740

Phone 231-242-1418 • Fax 231-242-1411

Statement on the Veto of Resolution # 032124-___ Restricting and Appropriating \$2 Million from General Fund – Fund Balance for Land Acquisition

Our homelands form the core of our identity and sovereignty as the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. Our ancestors did everything in their power to retain these homelands, signing treaties to cede millions of acres in exchange for a reservation that staved off the threat of western removal. Since a federal court dispossessed us of that reservation, preserving and expanding our homelands is a priority.

We must also prioritize the financial health of the Tribe and the wellbeing of our citizens. In 2010, the Tribe stood at the precipice of insolvency. Fortunately, sound advice and smart leadership enabled the Tribe to renegotiate its debts without catastrophic consequences. In 2019, the Tribe again found itself in a risky position when the General Fund balance dwindled to less than \$1 million. Fortunately, the Tribe came out unscathed after the federal government disbursed significant funding in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. After two close calls, we cannot rely on luck to spare us from overspending. We need to spend tribal funds wisely and transparently.

I am vetoing Resolution # 032124, which would appropriate \$2 million from the General Fund for land acquisitions because I am not convinced that the Council was wise or transparent with the nearly \$2.5 million spent on properties purchased under Resolutions 051922-01 and 101322-01.

At a minimum, land purchases must provide benefits to the Tribe and the citizens that are commensurate with the costs of acquisition, development, and maintenance. To do that, the Council first needs a clear vision that it advances through acquisitions. Before spending another two million of the Tribal Citizens' dollars, the Council should articulate its objectives and show how its purchases serve our citizens. A meaningful calculation of the cost-benefits ratio cannot be accomplished without assessing the condition of buildings and other structures, obtaining values for comparable properties, and providing for post-acquisition costs such as development and property taxes assessed before the federal government accepts the land into trust. Each purchase imposes long-term development and maintenance expenses that require devoting more annual resources in perpetuity. Finally, the Council's spending under recent appropriation resolutions demonstrates that a large available funding source leads to compulsive purchasing without due consideration of the resulting costs.

Transparency and public input are also missing from the land purchasing process. The Council needs to balance its desire for secrecy during the pre-closing purchase process with its obligation to give Citizens a voice in the expenditure of Tribal funds. As in the annual budgeting process, the citizens have a right to understand and influence how tribal government funds are spent. When it comes to property acquisition that is not happening. Instead, the Council selects parcels



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and authorizes offers in closed session, excluding the citizens from the process. The Council pursues property purchases in strict secrecy, referring to all properties only by number even after the purchase is complete. It does not publish its land purchases, nor the purchase price, plans for use, or estimated future costs. Given this lack of transparency, it is not clear that the Council considers each property's intended use or accounts for associated liabilities. That is unfortunate because properties acquired without an understanding of their usefulness relative to their cost risks the Tribe's financial security.

I fully expect the Council to override this veto: it appears to need immediate funds because it has already committed to purchasing another parcel despite having insufficient funds to cover the purchase price. Until 2022, the Council funded property purchases through resolutions that appropriated funds for a single purchase, notifying the Citizens of the parcel, its price, and its intended purpose. That approach worked. So long as the Council requests large appropriations to enable its carefree spending, I will veto.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Regina Gasco".

Regina Gasco, Tribal Chairperson

**Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians
7500 Odawa Circle
Harbor Springs, MI 49740**

TRIBAL RESOLUTION # 032124-_____

Restricting and Appropriating \$2 Million from General Fund – Fund Balance for Land Acquisition

WHEREAS, the Waganakising Odawak Nation, known as the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (“LTBB” or “Tribe”), and its citizens are vested with inherent sovereignty and the right to self-governance;

WHEREAS, LTBB is a federally recognized Tribal Nation under Public Law 103-324, and is a party to numerous Treaties with the United States, the most recent of which are the Treaty of Detroit of 1855 (11 Stat. 621) and the Treaty of Washington of March 28, 1836 (7 Stat. 491);

WHEREAS, expanding the Tribe’s land base is critically important to the sovereigns rights and interests of the Tribe due to the federal courts’ recent decisions not to reaffirm the boundaries of LTBB’s 1855 Reservation;

WHEREAS, LTBB’s Constitution vests Tribal Council with the power to purchase land that it deems beneficial to the Tribe; and

WHEREAS, establishing a dedicated funding source for land acquisition is essential to Tribal Council’s ability to effectively exercise its constitutional power to purchase land.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, \$2,000,000 is restricted from the General Fund – Fund Balance for land acquisition by Tribal Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, to expedite land purchases, the funds restricted by this Resolution are appropriated for new land acquisitions deemed beneficial to LTBB by Tribal Council.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, if the entire balance of this appropriation is not used in this or any subsequent fiscal year, all remaining funds shall be carried over to the next fiscal year, provided that such funds shall only be used for the purpose set forth above.

CERTIFICATION

As the Tribal Council Legislative Leader and Tribal Council Secretary, we certify that this Tribal Resolution was duly adopted by the Tribal Council of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians at a regular meeting of the Tribal Council held on March 21, 2024 at which a quorum was present, by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 3 absent as recorded by this roll call:

	In Favor	Opposed	Abstained	Absent
Fred Kiogima	X			
Tamara Munson	X			
William Ortiz				X
Aaron Otto	X			
Melissa Pamp				X
Jordan Shananaquet				X
Leroy Shomin	X			
Emily Proctor	X			
Marcella Reyes	X			

Date: 3/21/2024 Marcella R. Reyes
Marcella Reyes, Legislative Leader

Date: 3/21/2024 Emily Proctor
Emily Proctor, Tribal Council Secretary

Received by the Executive on 3-21-2024 by Lakota Worcupita

Pursuant to Article VII, Section D, Subsection 1 of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Constitution adopted on February 1, 2005 the Executive concurs in this action of the Tribal Council.

Date: 04-19-2024 Regina Gasco, Tribal Chairperson

Received from the Executive on _____ by _____

VETO