

LTBB Election Board Nonimation Application Form - SECTION 3
CANDIDATE STATEMENT (Limit to 1 page)
(This Section of Form Will Be Published on LTBB Website)



Boozhoo, Aanii,
Aaron Wayne Otto ndizhinikaaz. Mshiikenh ndoodem. Odaawa ndadibendaagwaz.
Waganakising ndoonjibaa. (Hello, My name is Aaron Wayne Otto. I am of the Turtle clan. I
belong to the Odawa Nation. I am from the IAnd Of The Crooked Tree.)

I am proud to come from a long line of Odawa. I am the great-great-grandson of Markus Otto and Mitchell Masteau. I am the great-grandson of Joseph Foster Otto, Christine (Baker) Otto, Edward Masteau, and Anna (Shenoskey) Masteau. I am the grandson of Hermes J. Otto and Norma E. (Masteau) Lee. I am the son of Steven Foster Otto and Deborah Ellen Corpe. I am the father of Aurora-Aria River Otto. I carry forward the legacy of my family with deep respect and commitment to our people. My vision is to ensure a thriving future for her and all future generations of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians.

Throughout my tenure on the Tribal Council, I have remained committed to addressing the needs of our citizens through proactive leadership, thoughtful decision-making, and an unwavering dedication to our shared values. I have worked on key initiatives aimed at strengthening our self-governance, protecting our natural resources, and expanding services for all citizens, including those living outside our immediate service area. My experience has shown me the importance of community-driven leadership, and I firmly believe that our future depends on collective action, listening to our people, and making decisions that prioritize long-term sustainability and cultural preservation.

As I seek reelection, my focus remains on strengthening our Nation through environmental stewardship, health and wellness, cultural revitalization, economic sustainability, and self-governance. I am committed to:

Protecting Our Environment : Advocating for stringent environmental safeguards, enhanced tribal oversight, and protection of our natural resources against threats like pipeline expansion. Our land and water are sacred, and I will continue to fight to ensure that future generations can enjoy them as our ancestors did.

Expanding Health Services : Supporting the construction of a new Health Park and developing a telehealth program to serve citizens inside and outside our service area. Access to quality healthcare is a fundamental right, and I will work to ensure that every citizen receives the care they need, regardless of location.

Preserving Culture and Language : Strengthening language immersion programs, promoting traditional healing practices, and fostering youth-elder connections. Our culture is the foundation of our identity, and investing in our language and traditions ensures that they continue to thrive.

Economic Development : Encouraging renewable energy projects and increasing support for tribal entrepreneurs to ensure long-term prosperity. By fostering sustainable economic growth, we can create jobs and build financial security for our people.

Addressing Housing Needs : Advocating for expanded housing initiatives, including tiny homes, family homes, and apartments to meet our community's diverse needs. Safe and stable housing is critical to the well-being of our citizens, and I will work to expand housing options that serve all generations.

Advancing Sovereignty & Advocacy : Enhancing intergovernmental relationships and ensuring that our Nation remains strong in negotiations with state and federal governments. Sovereignty is the backbone of our self-determination, and I will continue to advocate for our rights and interests on all levels.

I have had the privilege of serving our community and working toward solutions that address the challenges we face. My approach to leadership has always been rooted in active listening, ensuring that the voices of our elders, youth, and all tribal citizens are heard and represented. I believe that true progress happens when we work together, respect our traditions, and embrace forward-thinking strategies that benefit all.

Our people deserve leadership that listens, strategizes, and acts with both compassion and determination. My work has always been rooted in service, and I will continue to fight for solutions that uplift all tribal citizens. Whether through self-governance, expanded services, or infrastructure development, my goal is to build a future where every citizen of LTBB thrives.

Miigwech for your support and the opportunity to continue serving our Nation.

Aaron Wayne Otto

**LTBB Election Board Nomination Application Form - SECTION 2
(This Section of Form Will Be Published on LTBB Website)**

**Aaron Wayne Otto
Petitioner's Name As It Should Appear On The Ballot**

**ODEN, MICHIGAN
City & State of Residency**

1. Work Experience:

I have some experience in business ownership and extensive experience in tribal governance, with a strong background in leadership, financial oversight, and creative development. As the Owner and Graphic Designer of Indigenous Genius LLC since 2020, I have managed operations, led design development, and built strong client relationships.

My dedication to the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians is reflected in my tenure as a Tribal Council Legislator (2009-2017, 2021-present), where I have been responsible for legislating and appropriating funds to support tribal citizens. I have also served as Secretary and Legislative Leader of Tribal Council, actively engaging in key committees such as the Legal and Legislative Committee, Ethics Committee, and Land and Reservation Committee.

Prior to my role in governance, I worked as a Graphic Designer at Odawa Casino (2007-2009) and as a Prepress Graphics Specialist for LTBB (2005-2007), contributing to marketing, design, and communications. These experiences have equipped me with a well-rounded skill set, blending strategic governance, financial stewardship, and creative problem-solving to serve the LTBB community effectively.

2. Educational Background:

I pursued higher education from 1997 to 2004, culminating in my graduation in 2005 with a General Studies Degree. During this time, I attended North Central Michigan College and Central Michigan University, where I focused on a diverse range of subjects that have greatly contributed to my leadership and governance roles. My primary areas of study included Music, World Religions, Philosophy, Native American Studies, Drafting, and Business. This multidisciplinary education has provided me with a well-rounded perspective, blending creativity, cultural awareness, critical thinking, and practical skills that I have applied throughout my career in both business and tribal governance.

3. Traditional Cultural Experience/Knowledge, and/or Other Training, Certificates:

My connection to our Odawa traditions and culture is an integral part of who I am, and I actively engage in traditional arts and practices that honor our ancestors and strengthen our community. I have developed skills in beading, drum tying, finger weaving, basket weaving, and leatherwork, each of which reflects the craftsmanship and cultural significance passed down through generations. Additionally, I am a drummer and Native American flute player, using music as a means of cultural expression and connection.

Beyond traditional practices, I am deeply committed to activism and advocacy for Indigenous rights, human rights, and environmental protection. I have been actively involved in protesting against climate change, fracking, and oil pipelines, fighting to protect our water, land, and future generations. My dedication to these causes is rooted in the belief that as stewards of the land, we have a responsibility to uphold our traditions, defend our sovereignty, and ensure the well-being of our people and environment.

I have also been taught the importance of active listening—to truly hear the voices of my peers, elders, and youth in order to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences and concerns. By embracing this teaching, I strive to sympathize, empathize, and find the best path forward, ensuring that my leadership reflects the needs and values of our people. These efforts are a direct extension of my cultural values, reinforcing my commitment to both preserving our heritage and advocating for a sustainable and just future.

4. Volunteer Experience, Special Skills and Abilities:

My commitment to serving our community extends beyond governance and into activism and volunteer work. As an advocate for Indigenous rights, human rights, and environmental protection, I have dedicated time and energy to standing against climate change, fracking, oil pipelines and most of all our people. This work is rooted in a deep sense of responsibility to protect our land, our water, and our future generations, ensuring that our traditions and way of life are preserved.

In addition to activism, I am naturally curious and dedicated to lifelong learning. I am an information sponge, always eager to research and absorb new information that can help me better serve my community. My ability to learn quickly and recall information when needed has been invaluable in my role on Tribal Council, allowing me to adapt to new situations, navigate complex issues and make informed decisions.

I am a solution-oriented person, always striving to find the best path forward in any situation. I have an ability to see the bigger picture, identifying connections and gaps that others may not immediately recognize. This allows me to develop strategies that are both visionary and practical. My leadership style is rooted in compassion and heart, ensuring that I lead with empathy and cultural values, while also applying analytical decision-making to address challenges effectively.

These skills and abilities allow me to bridge tradition and progress, ensuring that our people are supported, our voices are heard, and our future remains strong.

5. Awards, Honors Received (cultural/colonial):

I take great pride in the trust my community has placed in me to serve on Tribal Council. Serving as Legislative Leader and Secretary of Tribal Council during my second term has been an honor. Looking back, I reflect on the confidence and support my peers showed in appointing me to these positions—it was a significant accomplishment. It reinforced my belief in the importance of collaboration, compassion, and understanding in serving our people.

Beyond governance, I am deeply committed to Indigenous rights, human rights, and environmental protection. My activism to protect our land, water, and sovereignty is a responsibility I take seriously. I have been invited to participate in panels to share my thoughts and perspectives on these critical issues.

Additionally, I have engaged in cultural exchange during my travels to Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and China, sharing my music with diverse audiences. Recognizing that I may be the only Indigenous person from America some people encounter, I take this responsibility seriously, presenting myself with dignity and authenticity to foster greater awareness of Indigenous culture.

My General Studies Degree, with a focus on Music, World Religions, Philosophy, Native American Studies, Drafting, and Business, has broadened my perspective and strengthened my ability to serve my community effectively. My commitment to our people, traditions, and future remains steadfast.

6. Describe Current and/or Previous Elected or Appointed Positions Held at LTBB or in Any Other Capacity, Government, or Organization (dates, titles, etc):

I have had the privilege of serving as a Tribal Council Legislator for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians from 2009-2017 and 2021-present. I was honored to be appointed by my fellow council members as Legislative Leader and Secretary, playing a key role in legislative processes, governance oversight, and community engagement. Additionally, I served on the Legal and Legislative Committee, Ethics Committee, and Land and Reservation Committee, contributing to policymaking and the protection of tribal lands.

Beyond governance, I have worked in creative and administrative roles. As a Graphic Designer at Odawa Casino (2007-2009), I managed various design projects and helped develop marketing campaigns. Prior to that, as a Prepress Graphics Specialist for LTBB (2005-2007), I contributed to tribal communications through newsletter layout, photography, and advertising redesigns. I also briefly worked in the LTBB Archives and Records Department, assisting in the preservation of historical and governmental documents.

These experiences have given me a broad perspective on governance, communication, and cultural preservation. My commitment to the well-being of our people drives my work, ensuring that both tradition and progress are upheld for future generations.

7. If applicable, describe anticipated Campaign Information in Detail (Campaign Address, Email, Website, Social Media, Campaign Plan, Any Endorsements, etc):

At this time, I am in the process of developing my campaign strategy and outreach efforts. As my campaign progresses, I plan to engage with the community through a combination of direct outreach, public forums, and digital engagement to ensure that I remain accessible to voters. I will provide updates on my campaign, including contact information, social media platforms, and any endorsements, as they become available. For now, you can follow my campaign on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/AWOforLTBB>. My goal is to run a campaign that prioritizes transparency, meaningful dialogue, and community-driven leadership.