

# White Earth Reservation Business Committee

Public Relations  
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News Release  
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## Other Governmental Project (OGP) addresses concerns over findings

**WHITE EARTH, MINN.** – The Other Governmental Project (OGP) has addressed potentially criminal concerns to the White Earth Reservation Business Committee over several findings based on a review of the documentation that the team has gathered so far.

Concerns include:

1. The property for the Star Lake Casino project was purchased for prices that far exceed the value of the property.
2. The property that was purchased for the Star Lake Casino had not been properly zoned or approved for casino use.
3. The Star Lake Casino project cost estimation jumped to over \$130 million without any logical justification.
4. The Bagley Casino was built for \$18 million. The original was for approximately \$6 million.
5. The Secretary-Treasurer at the time the casino projects were underway was allowing expenditures to take place within tribal programs that did not comply with standard procedures.

In addition to the findings, the OGP team expressed their concerns over their safety and they expect that any threats made against an OGP member, staff or any members of the White Earth RBC be taken seriously and properly dealt with by law enforcement.

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**Media:** The OGP letter is attached.

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December 7, 2018

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**RE: OGP Findings.**

Chairman Tibbetts:

I am writing to address grave concerns I have about the Other Governmental Project(OGP) findings thus far. Please note, that I'm writing this letter as a Leech Lake Band member that has been an attorney in the surrounding communities for over 20 years. Of those years I spent seven years working for the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and two years working as an Assistant County Attorney for Beltrami.

Accordingly, I am well versed in the legal history involving criminal involvement in local Indian gaming casino projects. I was the Legal Director for the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe after the former Chairman for the Band was indicted on federal charges for accepting bribes from an outside entity.

Further, I am also aware of the history of White Earth enduring the misfortune of having a criminal organization involved in the funding and management of the Shooting Star Casino. The end result of that debacle was that in May of 1992, the White Earth Band of Ojibwe was in debt \$22 million after opening the shooting Star Casino in Mahnomen. Meanwhile, approximately \$11 million was owed to the criminal enterprise Gaming World for a crooked management agreement. Basically, the tribal employees and Band members that worked for the Casino were treated as indentured servants to a crime family because all the Casino profits were going to Gaming World.

With that said, upon review of the documentation that has been gathered by the OGP team thus far, I see major red flags that indicate possible criminal activity. Here are my concerns:

- 1) The property that was purchased for the Star Lake Casino project was purchased by an LLC for prices that far exceeded the value of the property. There appears to be no logical rational to pay that type of inflated purchase prices for that property.**
- 2) The property that was purchased for the Star Lake Casino had not been properly zoned or approved for Casino use. The ability to have the property zoned for Casino use was very much up in the air. The fact that the land was not held in trust added numerous layers of regulations that were outside of the Band's jurisdiction and were controlled by both the state and federal governments.**
- 3) The Star Lake Casino Project cost estimation jumped to over \$130 million without any logical justification. It appears that numerous unknown investors were having to get involved and Val Redhorse's commission was going to jump to over 2 million dollars.**
- 4) The Bagley Casino was built for around \$18 million. The original projection was for approximately \$6 million. Again, land purchased for that project came at a severely bloated cost that far exceeded the appraised value of the property.**
- 5) The Secretary-Treasurer at the time the Casino Projects were underway were allowing expenditures to take place within tribal programs that did not comply with standard procedures. Further, the Secretary-Treasurer at that time was operating a micro-loan program for hand-picked constituents. The problem with the micro-loan program was that she did not have RBC approval and she was co-mingling her personal funds with Band funds and dispersing those funds to people she personally decided should get the money without any type of oversight by the RBC.**

The reason why I am disclosing the above is because I have serious concerns about the safety of the OGP team including, staff providing backup and the current Secretary-Treasurer. Since last Friday, Secretary-Treasurer Roy had someone threaten to shoot him, and his family was allegedly threatened at the Shooting Star Casino on Friday night. I do not play *hear no evil see no evil* when it comes to the safety of individuals who are trying to make a difference for White Earth Tribal Members.

Make no mistake about it, there is a strong likelihood that serious crimes involving unlawful expenditures of White Earth tribal money may have occurred. Therefore, I would expect that any threats made against a OGP member, staff, or any members of the White Earth RBC be taken seriously and properly dealt with by law enforcement.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael L. Garbow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael L. Garbow, Attorney-at-Law