

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF  
THE ONEIDA NATION**

We, the people of the Oneida Nation, grateful to Almighty God for his fostering care, in order to reestablish our tribal organization, to conserve and develop our common resources and to promote the welfare of ourselves and our descendants, do hereby ordain and establish this Constitution.

This constitution serves as an affirmation of the Oneida Nation's sovereign status as an independent Indian nation and the solemn trust relationship between this Nation and the United States of America.

**Article I-Territory**

The jurisdiction of the Oneida Nation shall extend to the territory within the present confines of the Oneida Reservation and to such other lands as may be hereafter added thereto within or without said boundary lines under any law of the United States, except as otherwise provided by law.

**Article II-Membership**

Section 1. The membership of the Oneida Nation shall consist of:

(a) All persons of Indian blood whose names appear on the membership roll of the Oneida Nation in accordance with the Act of September 27, 1967 (81 Stat. 229), Public Law 90-93.

(b) Any child of a member of the Nation born between September 28, 1967, and the effective date of this amendment, who is of at least one-fourth degree Indian blood, provided, that, such member is a resident of the Reservation at the time of the birth of said child.

(c) All children who possess at least one-fourth degree Oneida blood are born after the effective date of this amendment to members of the Nation who are residents of the reservation at the time of said children's birth.

Section 2. The General Tribal Council shall have the power to promulgate ordinances covering future membership and the adoption of new members.

**Article III-Governing Body**

Section 1. The governing body of the Oneida Nation shall be the General Tribal Council composed of all the qualified voters of the Oneida Nation.

Section 2. All enrolled members of the Oneida Nation who are eighteen (18) years of age or over shall be qualified voters provided they present themselves in person at the polls on the day of election.

Section 3. The qualified voters of the Oneida Nation shall elect from among the enrolled Oneida Nation members age twenty-one (21) and over who physically reside in either Brown or Outagamie Counties of Wisconsin by secret ballot (a) a chairman; (b) a vice-chairman; (c) a secretary; (d) a treasurer; (e) and five councilmen. These shall constitute the Business Committee and shall perform such duties as may be authorized by the General Tribal Council

A majority of the Business Committee including the chairman or vice-chairman shall constitute a quorum of this body. Regular meetings of the Business Committee may be established by resolution of the Business Committee. Special meetings of the Business Committee shall be held upon a three-day advance notice by the chairman to all members thereof or upon written request of a majority of the Business Committee stating the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.

The General Tribal Council may at any regular special meeting fill any vacancies that occur on the Business Committee for the unexpired term.

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, pursuant to a duly adopted ordinance. Such ordinance shall fix the specific causes for removal and ensure that the rights of the accused are protected, including his receiving in writing a statement of the charges against him and assurance on sufficient notice thereof where he shall be afforded every opportunity to speak in his own defense.

Section 4. The General Tribal Council shall meet in January and July.

Section 5. The officials provided for in Section 3 of this Article shall be elected every three years in the month of July on a date set by the General Tribal Council. The General Tribal Council shall enact necessary rules and regulations governing the elections of tribal officials.

Section 6. The chairman or fifty (50) qualified voters may, by written notice, call special meetings of the General Tribal Council. Seventy-five (75) qualified voters shall constitute a quorum at any regular or special meeting of the General Tribal Council.

#### **Article IV-Powers of the General Tribal Council**

Section 1. Enumerated Powers. - The General Tribal Council of the Oneida Nation shall exercise the following powers, subject to any limitations imposed by the statutes or the Constitution of the United States:

- (a) To negotiate with the Federal, State, and local governments.
- (b) To employ legal counsel, the choice of counsel and fixing of fees.

(c) To veto any sale, disposition, lease or encumbrance of tribal lands, interests in lands, or other tribal assets of the Nation.

(d) To advise with the Secretary of the Interior with regard to all appropriation estimates or Federal projects for the benefit of the Oneida Nation prior to the submission of such estimates to the Bureau of the Budget and to Congress.

(e) To manage all economic affairs and enterprises of the Oneida Nation.

(f) To promulgate and enforce ordinances, governing the conduct of members of the Oneida Nation, providing for the manner of making, holding, and revoking assignments of tribal land or interests therein, providing for the levying of taxes and the appropriation of available tribal funds for public purposes, providing for the licensing of non-members coming upon the reservation for purposes of hunting, fishing, trading, or other business, and for the exclusion from the territory of the Nation of persons not so licensed and establishing proper agencies for law enforcement upon the Oneida Reservation.

(g) To appoint committees, delegates, and officials deemed necessary for the proper conduct of tribal business or relations.

(h) To charter subordinate organizations for economic purposes and to delegate to such organizations, or to any subordinate boards or officials of the Nation, any of the foregoing powers, reserving the right to review any action taken by virtue of such delegated power.

(i) To adopt resolutions not inconsistent with this Constitution and the attached By-laws, regulating the procedure of the Council itself and of other tribal agencies, tribal officials, or tribal organizations of the Oneida Reservation.

Section 2. Future Powers. - The General Tribal Council may exercise such further powers as may in the future be delegated to the Council by the Secretary of the Interior or any other duly authorized official or agency of the State or Federal Government.

Section 3. Reserved Powers. - Any rights and powers heretofore vested in the Oneida Nation but not expressly referred to in this Constitution shall not be abridged by this Article, but may be exercised by the people of the Oneida Nation through the adoption of appropriate By-laws and constitutional amendments.

#### **Article V-Judiciary**

Section 1. The General Tribal Council shall, by law, establish a judiciary to exercise the judicial authority of the Oneida Nation.

Section 2. Any judiciary in operation prior to the effective date of this amendment to the Constitution may be designated as the judiciary authorized under this article upon passage of a resolution by the General Tribal Council. Such designation shall remain in full force and effect until amended by General Tribal Council.

#### **Article VI – Amendment**

Section 1. Amendment by the Oneida Business Committee. Amendments to this Constitution and By-Laws may be proposed by the Oneida Business Committee. Proposed amendments agreed to by eight members of the Oneida Business Committee, excluding the Chair, shall be put before a meeting of the General Tribal Council. If a majority of the voting General Tribal Council members vote in favor of the proposed amendment, the proposed amendment shall be placed upon the ballot of the next General election or special election called for the purpose to consider an amendment.

Section 2. Amendment by Petition. Amendment to this Constitution and By-Laws may be proposed by petition of the members eligible to vote. Every petition shall include the full text of the proposed amendment, and be signed by members eligible to vote, equal in number to at least ten percent (10%) of the members eligible to vote. Petition with the requisite number of signatures may be put before the Oneida people for their approval or rejection at the next general election, except when the Oneida Business Committee or General Tribal Council orders a special election for the purpose. Such petitions shall be filed with the person authorized by law to receive the same at least ninety (90) days before the election at which the proposed amendment is to be voted upon. Any such petition shall be in the form, and shall be signed and circulated in such manner, as prescribed by Oneida law. The person authorized by law to receive such petition shall upon its receipt determine, as provide by law, the validity and sufficiency of the signatures on the petition, and make an official announcement thereof at least sixty (60) days prior to the election at which the proposed amendment is to be voted upon. Any amendment proposed by such petition shall be submitted, not less than ninety (90) days after it was filed, to the next general or special election called for the purpose to consider an amendment.

Section 3. Any proposed amendment, existing provision of the Constitution and By-Laws which would be altered or abrogated thereby, and the question as it shall appear on the ballot shall be published in full as provided by Oneida Law. Copies of such publications shall be prominently posted in each polling place, at Tribal administration offices, and furnished to news media as provided Oneida law.

The ballot to be used in such election shall contain a statement of the purpose of the proposed amendment, expressed in not more than one hundred (100) words, exclusive of caption. Such statement of purpose and caption shall be prepared by the person who is so authorized by Oneida law, and shall consist of a true and impartial statement of the purpose of the amendment in such language as to create no prejudice for or against the proposed amendment.

If the proposed amendment is approved by sixty-five percent (65%) of the members eligible to vote who presented themselves at the polls and voted on the question, it shall become part of the Oneida Constitution and By-Laws, and shall abrogate or amend existing provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws at the end of thirty (30) days after submission of the final election report as directed law. If two or more amendments approved by the voters at the same election conflict, the amendment receiving the highest affirmation vote shall prevail.

#### **Article VII-Bill of Rights**

All members of the Nation shall be accorded equal opportunities to participate in the economic resources and activities of the Nation. All members of the tribe may enjoy, without

hindrance, freedom of worship, conscience, speech, press, assembly, association and due process of law, as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States.

## **BY-LAWS OF THE ONEIDA NATION**

### **Article I-Duties of Officers**

Section 1. Chairman of Council. - The Chairman of the Council shall preside over all meetings of the Council, shall perform the usual duties of a Chairman, and exercise any authority delegated to him by the Council. He shall vote only in the case of a tie.

Section 2. Vice-Chairman of Council. - The Vice-Chairman shall assist the Chairman when called upon to do so and in the absence of the Chairman, he shall preside. When so presiding, he shall have all the rights, privileges and duties as well as the responsibilities of the Chairman.

Section 3. Secretary of the Council. - The Secretary of the Tribal Council shall conduct all tribal correspondence and shall keep an accurate record of all matters transacted at Council meetings. It shall be his duty to submit promptly to the Superintendent of the jurisdiction, and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, copies of all minutes of regular and special meetings of the Tribal Council.

Section 4. Treasurer of Council. - The Treasurer of the Tribal Council shall accept, receive, receipt for, preserve and safeguard all funds in the custody of the Council, whether they be tribal funds or special funds for which the Council is acting as trustee or custodian. He shall deposit all funds in such depository as the Council shall direct and shall make and preserve a faithful record of such funds and shall report on all receipts and expenditures and the amount and nature of all funds in his possession and custody, at each regular meeting of the General Tribal Council, and at such other times as requested by the Council or the business committee.

He shall not pay out or otherwise disburse any funds in his possession or custody, except in accordance with a resolution duly passed by the Council.

The Treasurer shall be required to give a bond satisfactory to the Council and to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Section 5. Appointive Officers. - The duties of all appointive boards or officers of the Community shall be clearly defined by resolutions of the Council at the time of their creation or appointment. Such boards and officers shall report, from time to time as required, to the Council, and their activities and decisions shall be subject to review by the Council upon the petition of any person aggrieved.

### **Article II-Ratification of Constitution and By-laws**

This Constitution and these By-laws, when adopted by a majority vote of the voters of the Oneida Nation voting at a special election called by the Secretary of the Interior, in which at least 30 per cent of those entitled to vote shall vote, shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Interior for his approval, and shall be effective from the date of such approval. 7

### **Adoption Dates**

- Original Constitution adopted November 14, 1936 by Oneida Tribe. Approved by the Secretary of the Interior December 21, 1936.
- Amended June 3, 1939, approved June 15, 1939.
- Amended October 18, 1969, approved November 28, 1969.
- Amended June 14, 1969, approved August 25, 1969.
- Amended June 14, 1969, approved August 25, 1969.
- Amended June 14, 1969, approved, August 25, 1969.
- Amendment X approved June 16, 2015, notice received June 24, 2015
- Amendment XI approved June 16, 2015, notice received June 24, 2015
- Amendment XII approved June 16, 2015, notice received June 24, 2015
- Amendment XIII approved June 16, 2015, notice received June 24, 2015
- Amendment XIV approved June 16, 2015, notice received June 24, 2015