

Dear Mr. Anderson:

As you know, the USPS customers in Neskowin want to be sure that our contract post office continues. To help assure that, I became a representative of the community to communicate with USPS following the death of our contract post officer last spring.

I drove to Portland to meet with you and others of your staff to help work through a number of problems including the USPS decision that Neskowin residents should drive 20 miles round trip each day to pick up their mail. You were very helpful in getting that changed and all of us are grateful. Because of your genuine help then, I turn to you again now.

The USPS began the process to accept applications for the CPO job, and at a meeting at that time you advised that my point person at USPS during the process would be Ron Schaer. Thus all of my contacts have been with him. He provided updated information.

That search process produced 15 applications and we all viewed that number positively. Mr. Schaer later advised me that only two of those were acceptable. He said the 13 unacceptable ones were incomplete and therefore removed from consideration. He added that the two that were considered had bid amounts too high. Further, he said there would be a second search for applicants.

I thought it strange that 13 of 15 applicants could not have completed their forms. After talking with several whom I know and respect as solid community citizens I learned several things:

1. Some phone calls applicants made seeking advice on how a question could be answered were never returned, and
2. Some were returned and the answer was, "I can't advise you on that." So responsible citizen applicants did the best they could in responding to questions on the five page generic application with 11 pages of instructions and with reference to 80 pages on a web site.

I talked about this with Mr. Schaer and urged that in the second round more attention be given to responding to reasonable applicant inquiries and thereby increase the number of applicants that USPS would find acceptable. The lengthy form being used is obviously one used for varied other positions beyond seeking a CPO and reasonable attention to advising citizen applicants would pay off was the essence of my suggestion.

Now, months later, the second round of applications has been processed and the results are that of the 16 submitted only two were found complete. And both of them reportedly had bids that were too high...although one was apparently close to being OK.

In the second round no further assistance was provided than in the first. In the packet each received, applicants were instructed to seek advice only from Cheryl Grey in Denver and no one else. Some calls made were not returned; others were told questions asked could not be answered. In reply to one applicant citizen, she advised that he should not be concerned about the point. No one got the feeling that USPS wanted to provide assistance to be sure the job got

filled. One applicant, in trying to respond to a question about what bank do you use to make business loans, wrote “not applicable” because the individual did not have business loans with any bank. Later, and on inquiry, the applicant was told that the response to that question disqualified the application and removed it from consideration.

For all of my professional life I’ve been involved in receiving or supervising people who reviewed applications for jobs ranging from common labor, to ones that required a PhD degree. I’ve never been involved in any application process where only two out of 15, or two out of 16, applications were deemed acceptable. That is an 87% unacceptable or incomplete applicant rate and clearly suggests that there may well be a flaw somewhere in the process. Personally I know a number of these applicants, and they are capable of operating the contract post office in Neskowin.

Friday morning I phoned Mr. Schaer to learn first hand about the results of the second round of applications because months had gone by. Admittedly I had heard a negative rumor.

Later in the day he returned my call. At that time I learned the point that only two out of the 16 applications were acceptable. Further, he said that neither of the two had bid dollar amounts that were acceptable to the USPS. He added that the Neskowin CPO would not continue and that a bank of boxes would be installed along the highway instead. That was hearing a lot of USPS action taken quite quickly when up to that point everything had moved very slowly.

I told him that based on the information he had earlier told me about the volume of sales at Neskowin and based on what an applicant said his bid was, there should have been one bid acceptable. The bid amount shared with me would have provided USPS with an annual return of 37% based on the investment in the CPO contract. That’s hardly a bad return, at least in my experience.

I told Mr. Schaer that it felt like there was some other non-public factor that lead to the recommendation to eliminate the Neksowin CPO rather than finding an acceptable applicant with a satisfactory bid amount. And that further, I was shocked to learn of the idea of moving to a bank of boxes along the highway.

I ask you to reject that recommendation and instead move to further applicant search with clear instructions to the person in charge that you want to continue a CPO in Neskowin providing an acceptable candidate can be found. And further that you want the person in charge of the search to be sure to respond to all inquires from potential applicants and to do her/his best to provide adequate information to be sure that a high percentage of applications are completely acceptable...not a repeat of the last 12 1/2%.

The whole Neskowin community will anxiously await your decision to our request for a further search with reasonable support with the applicants.

Sincerely yours, Charlie Walker Copy delivered to Cong. Kurt Schraeder and a group of Neskowin citizens.