



Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians

Executive Branch of Tribal Government

Office of the Chief Executive

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: Band Assembly; Commissioner Towle
From: Virgil Wind, Chief Executive
Subject: Memorandum in Support of an Employee Appreciation Payment for the WEX workers
Date: December 15, 2025

I am writing this memorandum in support of an additional Employee Appreciation Payment, specifically for WEX workers. On November 3, 2025, I sent a letter supporting an appropriation of \$400,000 at the proposed rate of \$500.00 per employee, based on a count of 800 employees. This payment was issued from the FY2026 Investment Income Funds.

Commissioner Towle submitted a letter on November 4, 2025 which spelled out those who would qualify for the payment as follows: Full-time or part-time within two weeks preceding the dater of the payment, anyone on Family Medical Leave, anyone on Workers Compensation status, and anyone on one of the following Band boards/committees (Gaming Regulatory Authority, Tribal Employment Rights Office, Housing, Nay Ah Shing Schools, Department of Cannabis Regulation, MLBO MCT Delegates, Band Member Legal Services, and Department of Athletic Regulation) that held not less than one meeting from October 1, 2024-November 4, 2025.

After the payment rolled out, it was brought to my attention that the WEX workers were not included and really felt left out. Although they aren't considered full-time or part-time employees, they do work for the Band filling gaps where positions are open and employees are needed. The idea behind WEX is that they are placed in these positions in hopes that their efforts turn into full-time employment.

Currently, there are 65 WEX workers. I propose that a \$500.00 payment be made for a total appropriation of FY2026 Investment Income Funds in the amount of \$32,500.00.

Without their hard work and stepping up when needed, the Band would falter in some areas. They provide necessary help when called upon. They do elder snow plowing/shoveling in the winter and lawn mowing in the Spring/Summer/Fall. They also assist in various departments within the Band as follows: housing, garage, administration, cultural grounds, wood cutting for DNR for various reasons, and schools as well as other local native and local entities. Recently, a few WEX workers helped with the set-up and tear down for the Urban Christmas Party. Another



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WEX worker is currently filling in at the District 2a Community Center receptionist area. As such, I would like to also recognize their efforts in filling in the gaps and thank them as well.

For your review, I have enclosed a draft of the Band Assembly Bill and Commissioner Mel Towle's letter for the previous payment, as referenced above, for your review.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Virgil Wind", is written over a horizontal line.

Virgil Wind
Chief Executive

Enclosures:

1. Memo from Commissioner Towle dated November 4, 2025
2. Draft Band Assembly Bill