



Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians  
*Legislative Branch of Tribal Government*

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**Weekly Review: August 4-8, 2025**

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**Workshop**

**August 5, 2025**

Legal counsel facilitated a workshop with the Band Assembly regarding Health & Human Services resolution follow-up, Title 15, Title 16, Delegate Budget Request, Backpay appropriation request, non-grant funded requests from Chief Executive, Title 3, and Title 4.

**Weekly Sync Meeting**

**August 5, 2025**

Legislative staff facilitated a weekly sync meeting with elected officials and staff to review the upcoming Band Assembly agenda. The meeting included discussion on bills to work on, the workshop schedule, workshop projects, and District Representative initiatives.

**Band Assembly Meeting**

**August 6, 2025**

The Speaker of the Assembly convened a meeting of the Band Assembly. The District Representatives amended and approved the agenda.

The District Representatives amended and approved Band Assembly Bill 21-04-36-25 (A Bill Authorizing a Supplemental Appropriation for the purpose of authorizing expenditures and budget/payroll revision(s)/transfer(s) for the Executive branch for the Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2025).

The District Representatives approved Resolution 21-04-47-25 (A Resolution authorizing an application for Elder Services funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Community Living and Aging Older Americans).

The District Representatives approved Resolution 21-04-48-25 (A Resolution approving the appointment of Bobby (Ogimaa Giniw) Eagle to the American Indian Mental Health Advisory Council).

The District Representatives approved a contract addendum for Granicus Services agreement, which extends the Live streaming contract. Contract end date is August 14, 2026.

**Messages from the Chief Executive:**

Chief Executive Virgil Wind shared a letter to Parliamentarian Smith entering something into the record, he requested the enclosed letter be distributed to the Band Assembly members pursuant to 9.1c of the Rules and Procedures for Band Assembly under rules 1.2e and 7.8f as this letter has been filed with the Clerk of the Assembly and will be considered a Band Assembly record he expects the letter to be included with the minutes as the Band Assembly shall maintain minutes that contain the full true and correct record of all the proceedings according to rule 10.0. he distributed the letter to

Parliamentarian Smith and he also has a copy of the letter he wants to read as part of his messages. He read the letter dated August 6, 2025 regarding Commissioner Nominations “Dear Band Assembly:

In the past several weeks, the Band Assembly has denied four Band member nominees to the positions of Commissioner of Administration and Commissioner of Corporate Affairs. All Band members, all highly qualified. Recently, the Band Assembly amended its rules to deny hearings to three of these nominees. I cannot pretend that I am pleased with this decision to operate in such a non-transparent manner.

I also feel obligated to speak up for the positive qualifications of all my nominees who have been denied. Beginning with Darcie Big Bear, she is an extremely talented individual who persevered day and night to move the Band forward. I will always be grateful for her sacrifices because I witnessed them firsthand. Second, Sarah Oquist has a resume as impressive as any I have seen. Her track record of turning around troubled businesses is every bit as impressive. Third, Michele Palomaki's skillset, reputation, work ethic, and service to the Band speak for themselves. She is respected by so many Band members and employees, and would have done a tremendous job in stabilizing Band government during these challenging times. Finally, Ronda Weizenegger has worked for 24 years in faithful service to the Band's casinos. She also understands our businesses, our government, and our culture. These nominees are all strong and fantastic Anishinaabe women.

These nominees have a combined total of more than 75 years of service to the Band. If none of them are qualified for these positions, it is not clear to me who is.

In response to the Band Assembly's demand that I post the Commissioner of Administration position, this is a process I already went through last year. Although I respect the Band Assembly's recommendation, I am fully aware of the Band members interested in the position and what their qualifications are. Moreover, when I send a nominee for Commissioner of Administration to the Band Assembly, it is because I have already assessed that person as best fit for the job. The Band Assembly may not always agree with that assessment, but it remains both the Chief Executive's prerogative and responsibility to decide the nominee.

As for the Band Assembly's demand that I post the Commissioner of Corporate Affairs position and conduct a national search, my preference is to find a talented Band member to fulfill these duties. Under 4 MLBS § 6(b), it is the responsibility of the Chief Executive, not the Band Assembly, to appoint Executive Officers. The Band Assembly, in contrast, possesses only the power of confirmation. And by insisting that I conduct a national search, the Band Assembly seems to be implying that there isn't a single Band member whether working at MLCV or elsewhere--who is capable of running our business enterprises. I wholeheartedly refuse to accept that mode of thinking.

Moving forward, I ask that the Band Assembly to delineate a clear confirmation process so that I can properly prepare my nominees.” He shared Mr. Speaker that’s the letter and then a comment on the letter. He shared “So, having sat here and served on the Legislative Branch and having denied a few nominations as well, I believe that we really truly spent a lot of time vetting these nominees and have brought them forward for you know their years of experience and their commitment to serving our band membership and really confused as to why some of them haven’t received the proper confirmation hearing or at least the rationale as to you know why they weren’t chosen. It also was very apparent that with the recent rule change the process for nominations and critical nominations be considered may or may not have been followed, just making sure that whatever that process is that it’s clearly; you know explained to us so that I can prepare my nominees in the future for whatever that is. We have created a process within the Executive Branch of preparing the nominees for a confirmation hearing; letting them know kind of how that whole thing plays out and whether or not

they've received one I guess that's up to you guys, but really knowing what that clear up and down vote is you know according to the rules of the Assembly, you know the nomination may make the agenda may not make the agenda but it's very unclear what the recent rule changes were. Just asking for a more transparent form, especially when considering critical nominations to the Band, really do appreciate that but really making a public statement that I don't know what the best way to move forward is and also a statement that statute does not require a posting of any of those positions, so I do appreciate your time. Thank you so much and hopefully we can figure this out because what's really going to start happening is the services that you know nearly 5100 band members are entitled to and expect us to continue doing are going to start suffering, so whatever we have to do to figure it out. I do appreciate your time. Miigwech,"

### **Messages from the Representatives:**

District I Representative Carolyn Beaulieu shared for District I members she did a video update yesterday, take a look at that on Facebook it describes what was done for the month of July and what's coming up in August.

District II Representative Wendy Merrill shared she has a few things to add she wanted to start with the position of the previous Chief Executive, she shared "I do recall Chief Wind when you were in the District I Representative position and Chief Benjamin was in her position you had stated numerous times that you wanted those positions posted, so I guess I don't understand where; where that changed and how that changed when I talked to constituents throughout the Band they had expressed to you personally that they wanted this position posted and I will read this correspondent as well because you're stating there's no why behind these reasons for denial but I will read the letter that we had sent to you for Michele Palomaki." She read the letter "Dear Chief Wind, Thank you for the nomination of Michelle Palomaki for Commissioner of Administration. We respect Michelle's service and dedication to the Band in numerous positions over the years. Although your familial relationship with Michelle is not a direct conflict under Band statute, it can be a perceived conflict to Band constituents. Further, without the position being posted, it is difficult to know if your nominee is the most qualified. So, I will just state for a fact that the Commissioner of Administration position was posted but not applicants were interviewed, so there's that. I mean if we talk about a fair process that's something you had stated throughout your campaign is that you would be posting these positions. Number one, I'll just state you knew last year that you weren't going to appoint the Corporate Affairs Commissioner, you knew last July, you waited a whole how many months to actually put somebody forward. Number two you know these correspondences were sent to the Chief Executive office so there's a reason behind that. And then I want to make sure we're being clear here I think all three of us had stated to you individually how we felt about these nominations and as for Ronda I will speak for that like I personally think she deserved a hearing. So that's all I'll add I don't have anything in regards to my office at this point, but I just want to make those statements and looking forward to our meeting tomorrow."

District III Representative Harry Davis shared "In response to Virgil's letter. Regarding the position of Corporate Affairs, personally I am looking for someone in that position that can bring back our revenues to what they used to be, I know they've been following for many years now under the former Commissioner and we need to rebound at some point and I think this is a good opportunity to find someone that can do that for us and I don't think/believe that Ronda would be able to do this because she was learned by the former Commissioner and he didn't seem to know how to rebound and that's what I have to say about that one. As far as Sarah I believe she was removed or she resigned for reasons we don't need to discuss right now that's kind of why we didn't approve that

one. As far as Michele I believe she could do the job, but there may be a conflict there that needs more discussion and I don't really have an opinion on that right now. That's all I have for that,"

**Messages from the Secretary-Treasurer:**

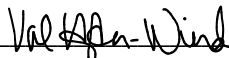
Secretary-Treasurer Sheldon Boyd shared "My remarks are to membership as a whole and what you're seeing here is kind of the design of our government, and our government is made of the checks and balances and there are good times when everybody, when things click and things move along and there's a time when people don't agree and there's some head butting and those are the ups and downs of our government so some folks may want to; they want to construe it as a stop and I've talked to other folks from other; working for other tribes and they call our, see our version of government as stable because there's no run way on one way on the other; one way or the other. There are times when people don't get along and I had the benefit of listening to a recording from the about 1985 from the old Assembly and the recording talked about leadership and how the leadership should always stand together on the behalf of the people and I think leadership does for the most part stand together for when dealing with people I'd like to think and share with membership that even though folks here have difference of opinion, they still get along on a personal level they're not mean to each other or nothing like that and there's a personal side and a business side. What you're seeing here is how things are supposed to work sometimes and it's difficult and I have faith that folks here involved will get through it, and I just want folks to kind of observe and the way that the government's built is that not everyone gets what they want but they find a way and there are tough spots and we'll get through this."

**Workshop**

**August 7, 2025**

Legal counsel facilitated a workshop with the Band Assembly regarding Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures capital project requests, Chief Executive's appropriations request, Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures budget, delegate budget request, and Title 16.

*The next Regular Band Assembly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 13, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.*

  
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Valerie Harrington-Wind  
Chief Communications Officer